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LIFE AT  
LAUREL TOWN  
IN  
ANGLO-SAXON KANSAS

KATE STEPHENS

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**LIFE ON A FARM NEAR  
LAUREL TOWN**

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

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# LIFE AT LAUREL TOWN

IN

## ANGLO-SAXON KANSAS

BY

**KATE STEPHENS**

Sometime Professor of Greek in the University of Kansas

Our leading men are not of much account, and never have been, but the average of the people is immense.

*Walt Whitman.*

Be folks (people). Your only, your real duty, is to keep democratic in your heart.

*George Sand.*

Lawrence, Kansas  
**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
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**LIFE ON A FARM NEAR  
LAUREL TOWN**

Nov. 17/20

## DIONYSUS IN KANSAS

*Make glad!  
The Lord of Growth has come;  
The sun has half his northward journey done,  
And in deep-buried roots moves the Spirit!*

*On the dark-earthed fields  
Fires of last year's husks the farmer kindles—  
Sacrifices to the Lord of Growth;  
Smoke rises to the bluer heavens;  
While hawk and solemn crow cut with long wing the sparkling air.  
And little birds do sing, "Rejoice!  
Rejoice! the Springing Life is here!"*

*Mounting sap now brightens trunk of tree and vine;  
And every tip-most twig swells out its leaf-buds.*

*The peach puts forth her bitter-tinted pink;  
Redbud empurples far each wooded stretch;  
And, by the magic of the Lord of Spring,  
Stand orchards, very ghosts of winter snows, white-cloaked  
in blossom.*

*Wheat, O sisters, greens in our rolling glebe!  
And corn, O brothers, springs from its golden seed!*

*For Sun-Warmth, and Wind-Strength, and Praise-God-Rain  
Are abroad in our land;  
Three builders of worlds, with the Spirit,  
Go forth hand in hand.*

*Make glad!  
The Lord of Growth has come;  
The sun has near his northward journey run,  
And in deep-buried roots moves Life-Ever-Living!*

## LIFE ON A FARM NEAR LAUREL TOWN

### I

From heights of Kansas City the lands rolling westward gleamed like a Land of Beulah that spring my Father first saw Kansas. Civil War had ended. Peace had come.

And a Kansas spring was burgeoning—the verdure of April, indescribably luscious May days, June air fragrant with wild grape blossoms and musical with stir of leaves. As the traveler watched and waited on Kansas City bluffs, and later turned his horse's head towards Paola and Laurel Town, the soil's promise of overmastering harvests delighted him.

A certain melancholy which broods over the state, greater in the western than eastern part, a *genius loci*, induced, perhaps, by the seemingly unending stretch of fertile earth, a broad sky shutting down like an inverted bowl and suggesting the impenetrability of heaven—sometimes conveying by massing of clouds, fierce winds and rains, vaultings of lightning and

voices of thunder, the impression that demiurgic forces are about to unite and grind to nothing the puny works of man—this reverse of the loving exuberance of Kansas nature affected the traveler slightly.

Then, too, the people at the time of his coming settled, and settling, in this rich environment—a people for the most part of the blood of Anglo-Saxon state-makers, a democracy saving to the world the traditions and courage of their forefathers; ranchers and lovers of live stock, farmers and such fosterers of growing grain that, like the Hebrew Job of old, they never “let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley”; farmers as farms were in those days; not seeking to specialize, as in this of ours, but growing a little of every farm thing for their families’ needs and comforts; having their own orchards, their own berry bushes, their own vegetable gardens, their own chickens, pigs, cows and even sheep.

Sometimes these people were children of frontier dwellers for generations, cradled in supplies so slender that they had developed a godlike energy, an amazing adaptability, and what it might be unjust to call insensibility to finer shadings and yet was not wholly stoicism of feeling.

Also there were the citizens—craft folks, professional folk, gathered in the community of tiny towns where no man owned material advantage over his neighbor, and therefore was not apt to assume to himself airs of superiority.

This people, identical in ethics and language, identical in political ends, my Father thought as free a democracy as the world had ever seen, alert of intellect, restless in experiment, inebriate of optimism, self-confident to an astonishing degree, earnest in our American faith in education and local self-government; and loyal to the ideas of our foreparents who looked upon government as a form to which they, exercising their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, contributed support and delegated their authority, not a system from which they might draw maintenance and patronage.

Parasitic peoples, those not led by spiritual vigor and spiritual truth—people who go where wealth is merely because wealth is there, fervent solely for themselves, ignorant of the institutions of our country, or disregardful of their meaning in any other significance than affording them a protected dwelling place and opportunity to make money; and also parasitic institutions which establish themselves and fatten on present human labor and accumulations of past labors

—in those days, in Kansas, they were too few to count.

These two makers of environment, the magnificence of nature and the spirit of Anglo-Saxon statemakers, led my Father to cast his lot in the state when an invalidism settled upon him and made change of climate needful.

Years before, in New York, he was a lawyer with a lucrative practice. When President Lincoln sent out the call of the 15th of April, 1861, for seventy-five thousand volunteers, however, he at once locked his office-doors and went enlisting men for defense of the Union.

Not many days later his recruits assembled in the main street of the snug, little village—it was a bright, spring morning and wives and children, and folks from the neighboring hills, were there to see. Drums beat attention, two or three men stepped forward and presenting him with a captain's sword buckled it round his waist, and the company set forth for war.

“Marched from Martinsburg [Virginia] to Bunkerhill,” he wrote in his diary, under July 15th. “Marched to Charlestown,” July 17th. “Marched to Harper's Ferry,” July 20th. “Battle of Lovettsville,” August 8th; and two days later, “Went to Baltimore sick.”

When able to travel he came home “suffering

from fever, neuralgia and general prostration resulting from severe service," the army-surgeon stated. By merit of home, and rest, he so far recovered as to resume practice of law.

But after a couple of years the doctors found him invalided by war's aftermath, tuberculosis of the lungs. They gave him "two years to live" (a child standing by overheard their sentence), and sent him south for benefits of open-air healing.

The south, totally disrupted, proved hostile to his family traditions. He saw he must seek an environment other, in spiritual lines, if he were once more to have wife and children with him. So, urging his horse northward, delaying sometime in Missouri because of its attractive face, but there, also, finding hatred of his home and people, he finally came to Kansas City, and from its heights looked out over fat lands rolling westward.

Country life Pater had always loved. Years before, when practising law in New York, a farm some thirty miles from his office delighted him, and to its pleasantnesses he would often go, spending the day in the open, laying out work for its men. Besides gratifying his taste for close touch with the land's beauty and for thought, such outings increased his frail body's



strength. And now, when need of spending his days out of doors had shut him off from his profession, he determined to be a farmer, theoretical if not practical, but practical as far as possible.

The land he chose for our home, summing about two hundred and thirty acres, lying northward of and adjoining Laurel Town, had many features unusual to a Kansas farm; for instance, in its upland and lowland. And from the main-traveled road on the west line, to the Kansas river and skirting willows on the east, it held some especially lovely spots.

Wooded ground which had never known the plough lay on its southern border, along a little amber stream called "brewery brook," and on the north a like band of primeval forest stretched from highway to river. Nature had planted the woods after her sweet fashion of making her garden, and in the shadow of the trees wild geranium and columbine blossomed, and wind-flowers nodded, and purple violets carpeted the ground in spring.

The most striking figure of the south woods was a black walnut standing with a girth of toward twenty feet—rising in majesty and aloofness so apart from its brothers, and their shade, that the sun had rounded its branches to

an almost perfect globe. A little way off a ravine intersecting this woodland ran north and south, and a sycamore, laid low by some wind, had spanned the gully. Upon the sycamore's satiny bark we walked across when river-waters filled the ravine in time of flood—there, too, warm afternoons in spring, when frogs were chorusing and water-bugs skating, I found a good place for studying Virgil.

Such little localities as these Pater especially loved, and, as winters passed and springs neared, he spent many a day in their company, himself gaining vigor; here rescuing from deformity some young tree caught by freakish winds and pinned under a weight, there slipping pruning knife at a root he knew to be noxious.

Than the coming of spring in Kansas nothing can be more beautiful. It is day after day of perfection. Winds do blow over rolling lands. Even in February, as if conscious of a mighty secret they purpose later to reveal, they begin a hollow murmur, and dip down chimneys, and slap house-tops and loosen cornices. Not all days are calm.

Neither are all days warm. Frosts dart from upper airs.

But tree-trunks brighten, and the onward push of beauty is so superb—color in sky and

budding things; the very soil gleams back at you—so overwhelming in voice of lowing calf and whinnying mare, amorous birds and wild, sweet-scented winds, there is no telling in words.

All leading to May—to the earth inwrought with violets, flowering star-grasses, mandrake, yellow blossoms of the oxalis, native blue phlox. And above this carpet from the Eternal's loom, tree and shrub leafed in rose-velvet or fresh green, thrushes fluting, mourning dove lamenting passion to mate, and the meadow-lark

"Scattering his loose notes in the waste of air."

With June ahead! Ripe-eared wheat-fields shadowed by clouds drifting across the sky. Lakes of corn, their dark-green blades swishing drowsily, like little waves lapping pebbly shores, and whispering prophecies of September kernels. Myriads of bees booming their wares (just as brokers do) as they pass from clover-globe to purple clover-globe and then whirl away to hive their stores.

Where, round a fecund earth, can you find sight more enchanting!—a heaven of sapphire blue on-spurring fruits of an ambitious, up-sending soil and their message for the furthering of man; standing from dawn till that veiling hour when grey sphinx-moth and ruby-throated

humming-bird search their supper in the cup of the trumpet-flower.

Those closings of the day, at times, especially in May and June, forerun by rainbows, we often gathered, like a group of Parsees, to watch the sky's tumbling, tumultuary vapors—billows crimson, golden, amethyst, sea-green and soft greys shading to black; or a gleaming globe, unattended by cloud seraphim, sinking in solitary splendor behind the western hills.

We also knew early mornings in summer when the sun struck the river, and brightened its waters till they shone out behind the fringing willows and made a silver ribbon binding the land. And in depths of winter, too, when "Phoebus 'gan to rise," we watched for the two misty sun-dogs who would now and then start him on another circuit of the heavens.

One of our family cults was finding the earliest dog-tooth violet. Days in February we would notice winter silences giving way to those mysterious voices which bespeak the spring theophany near; and then we would slip off without others' knowledge to turn leaf-mould in the woods, or to lift fallen boughs from warm bank-sides, heckling our brains to recall where we had noted the sturdiest plants. As weeks went on our hunt grew more thorough, and some-

times of a biting morning, we plunged out of doors to see if the plant we had chosen had not, coaxed by warm airs of the day before, put forth a pale bell, nodding now in spite of bitter skies. In this contest Pater commonly came off victor, and offered the firstling, eyes dancing and fine mouth smiling to our: "You *are* a winner, Daddy! Where you found it I don't see." From that hour spring had come.

The legended redbud also marked the year's incoming tide. I still recall mornings when report went at breakfast that one of the trees had garmented itself in imperial colors, amid a group of pawpaws and coffee-beans down on the south bank—to one redbud slipping roots in level ground you will find an aspiring ten loving to climb the broken side of a hill. Redbuds bespeak Kansas. That April morning the train rolled up the valley bearing us to our new home, our fascinated eyes saw first the Kaw silvering on our left, and then, on the right, ridges far and woods near blotched with the purple of the lovely tree.

Many another growth witnessed to the beauty through which nature speaks in Kansas. On a little rise between our house and Laurel Town, at the edge of the highway, just outside the fence and therefore public property, a wild crab

lifted its warty trunk. It was a sturdy little fellow, the tree, not so tall as wild crabs sometimes grow, but making up for its dwarfish stature by a particularly beautiful and symmetrical umbrella of branches and foliage. We loved the wilding, just as you love some cherished growth, and Pater protected its sturdiness, so far as he was able; and also its comrade, the weaker mandrake, that grew close to and straight up from its foot.

A number of springs, as we drove to and from town, we watched for the coming of the crab-blossoms and mandrake, and when they did set out their wonders, we would climb from whatever we were riding in, buggy, phaeton or red wagon, to look closer at the pallor of mandragora hiding herself in her own heavy shade, and the crab-buds holding forth their auroral pink. Somehow we never thought of picking or tearing the blossoms—that would have seemed desecration; an expectancy of the future and regard for others' rights forbade.

But at last, in an election, a new roadmaster (I think that was the name the law gave him) came into power—a man, I fancy, who endeavored to do his duty in whatever place it pleased heaven to call him, and to do it thoroughly. Leastwise, one day, when we were all gone about

our various duties and no one by to defend the helpless, this roadmaster came with a squad of malefactors (they called themselves road-makers) and they cut down the crab tree and drove a scoop shovel over the mandrake.

Back in the centuries, ancestors of ours had a legend that mandrakes cry when wrenched from their soil.

"And shrieks like mandrakes, torn out of the earth,  
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad,"

said Romeo's Juliet.

What wail did our mandrake send forth that morning, I wonder!

But those road-makers did not run mad. They were mad before they destroyed the beauty nature had, for reasons nature alone knows, paired in intimacy. Barren ignorance only pardons their act. They gained nothing by their havoc, save another stretch of plastic clay; ready for gullying by Kansas down-pours; not protected even by such substitutes as nature in helpful mood is able to plant in Kansas—sumach and buckberry, mullein and butterfly weed, and the old, native blue-stem grass.

The cutting off of crab and mandrake, beauty-bringing, not offending, proved one of our early disillusionings.

## II

We had gone to the farm to stay by it. Pater was not satisfied with all he found at hand, however. He remembered with affection growths of his old home, and he sent to Rochester, Philadelphia, Marblehead and other nursery-centres for many a tree, shrub, vine and vegetable. Orchard planting with him was almost a passion; and he imported varieties of trees he thought fitted for the Kansas climate.

One afternoon I recall, when he and another lover of apples whose name I am not so fortunate to bear in memory—how the two walked about young plantations in the mellow fall sunshine discussing sorts new to pomologists, affectionately rubbing palm over a sapling's bark, opening knife now and then to strike off a sucker, and finally picking first fruits and going with heaping hands and pockets to the dining room for sampling. They had kindly included me in the excursion, and after I got silver-bladed knives for cutting the fruit (for that metal would resist the acid of the apple and not defect the taste), they invited my opinion as to flavor, tenderness and succulency of meat, and other points worth attention in the product of Eve's goodliest tree.



Among his importations of beauty, and not of practical use, that we regarded with special affection was a fringe or smokebush which Kansas suns forced to luxuriant proportions; and among roses a "perpetual bloomer," as catalogues say, which we knew by the name of "Madame Laffay." The rose had a modest turn of petal, as well as a deep pink color and fragrant scent, and served Pater in his habit of picking a flower and laying it by the breakfast or dinner plate of some member of the family. The tray that bore food to the one of us confined to a sick-room often carried his greetings of a "Madame Laffay"—one such tray laden with tender shoots he had searched the asparagus bed to find, I remember; and there beside the toast lay his good wishes, the rose.

In years since then all these growths have perished—not only trees and shrubs of practical value, but of touching history. Where stood an orchard from which winds of early May bore through our house the fragrance of apple blossoms and whitened the grass with fallen petals, succulent alfalfa was lately growing. But he who cut down the orchards (alas!) had at least one pleasure—for we learned long before, at times trimmers were lopping branches, that apple-tree wood burns brightly in a fireplace,

and when the wind curls down the chimney of a gummy evening in November, and send whiffs of smoke into the room, its scent is delicious.

Although he had bought other farms lying across the river, on the home-place Pater spent his love of the growth of things. Renters, testifying to their skill in husbandry and vaunting the richness of the soil, might bring water-melons weighing more than fifty pounds from "White Turkey"; or from "Hawk's Nest" bags of astonishing yams and corn in its day of perfection for the hungry tooth (such ears as our negro friends used to call "roastin' years"), nothing could swerve his loyalty from the home-place.

In propagation he wanted to improve breeds, and he introduced strains of blood new to Kansas. Mares of good pedigree he brought from the old New York home; and cows of Shorthorn variety he imported to better beef grown for market. Each offspring of these animals we rejoiced in and would discuss through a meal-time what name it should bear.

None of us, however, seemed so successful as Pater in hitting the right descriptive; as "Miggles," after Bret Harte's heroine, for a grey colt; "Beauty" for a Shorthorn calf, perfect in color and outline; "Lucy Lightfoot" for

a gazelle-like, chestnut-sorel colt. A bull he named "Robert Burns" because of certain lines of the poet about a rantin', roarin' laddie. In one instance alone do I remember that I succeeded with a name—when a tiger-striped tramp-cat took up abode with us and I dubbed her "Sallie Brass" because, especially in face, she so much resembled that heroine of Dickens; and, on looking at the cat, friends, with a burst of laughter, said they easily traced the likeness.

Pigs our farm bred by scores, and although about those interesting and sagacious animals, who loved their freedom of broad fields and crunched yellow corn with amazing gusto, my knowledge is somewhat hazy, I know I am safe in saying they were of the Berkshire breed—yet in my mind's eye I seem, also, to see certain smooth sides of the Poland China.

The comeliness of the piglings in their early days, their slickest of black satin skins, their shrewdest of wits, their cunningest of eyes and hungriest of "tummies"—how could one forget the wights! What a sight it was when a mother threw herself on her side with half-shut eyes of rest and satisfaction in motherdom, and her brood fell to rooting, squealing and crowding for their suppers! Was ever natural sight more mirth-provoking to on-lookers watching over the

fence, or satisfactory to actors themselves! With what appetite did the tiny, scareful scamperers pump their milk!—and when they had their surfeit run grunting to a bundle of straw and pack together for sleep!

In poultry Pater brought in brilliant-plumaged Spanish pheasants. The shell of their eggs had a peculiar translucence, which, we used to say, made them look like pearls. Each industrious hen was apt to meet her duty of laying an egg a day, except in midwinter. But then we may have been gifted with that power Auntie Lee said her owner ascribed to northerners: "De Yankees cozen de hens to make four eggs out o' three."

Through our Father's fondness for animals and household-pets we had always various sorts indoors as well as out. Our adventures with their personalities would fill a book of days. Most wonderful of them all, I think, was a little hybrid who inherited a half-shaggy tail and upright ears from his milk-white, finely proportioned, Spitz mama, Nipha (named after the Greek word for snow), and for the rest the short hair and colors of his black-and-tan terrier sire. That he came to be an important member of the family would seem all the odder, if you knew my Father's care for fine strain in his dumb

friends. But this little fellow won his way by sheer truth and sincerity, his affection and unswerving loyalty; qualities he doubtless inherited from his lady dam.

He answered to John in everyday life, but his full-sized title was Jonathan Edwards, because, just as the distinguished divine of that name, at an exceedingly precocious age, interested himself in his days' burning question of freedom of the will, so this black-and-tan terrier, when a few weeks old, finding himself alone in the library, fell to riddling a pamphlet which treated nineteenth-century views of Liberty and Necessity.

As the little creature grew in months and years, he came to be the canniest of all dumb creatures we had ever known. His knowledge passed caniness—it was uncanny. All things touching life about him he understood. Even if, knowing his eyes were shining and upright ears listening, you in circumlocutory phrase asked the man to bring up your horse at a certain hour, John knew; and just about that hour he would have pressing business calling him out of the house.

When he had induced you to open the door, and with apparent indifference and dignified slowness had walked to the edge of the porch,

he would, after a moment's leisurely survey of the landscape, set out clipping for the recesses of a hedge a little distance away. You would turn your horse's head towards town and drive past the hedge. Then John would suddenly materialize. If you did not want his company, you could not force him back, tell the truth as you might.

At last, wearied of exhorting him settled on his haunches and eying you with a countenance which said, "Suppose you have done with all this chinning and go on"—when finally you drove forward, he would drop in the rear of your phaeton and pay whatever visits you paid, going in with you, sitting close to your knee, and listening with only an occasional yawn. In spite of the yawn he may not have found your wit so intollerably dull; "When I play with my cat," said Montaigne, "who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she makes me?"

After my Father went on the bench, John seemed to find he must accompany the Judge every day court sat and roads were not muddy—not in muddy weather, for he was exceedingly neat about his person, and such days he would look drearily down the road and stay behind. Keeping clean was an instinct of his. When occasion had forced him in the wet Kansas clay,

he would glance from his feet to you and stand with a deprecatory expression on his sensitive face, till, from sheer laughter and pity you fell to and helped him restore the neatness he loved.

A storm might come when he was in Laurel Town. Then, oftenest, he would drop away from his master, take the sidewalk direct to my sister, Mrs. Green's house, announce himself by a characteristic pawing at an entrance, and when the door opened go in and pass the night as her guest, staying sometimes more than one night if the roads kept bad; but in three days, even with "mud more 'n bootleg deep" (as one of our black aunties once described the mire) picking his way home with crestfallen looks and pleas of forgiveness in every line of his small body. He could not ride in a wagon because its motion upset him.

As I have intimated, John had a most extraordinary sense of time—the time of day—and if, when my Father was holding court, the usual hour for adjournment had passed, the little rascal would issue from a private room, and go to the Judge and strike him with a forepaw on the knee. Lawyers practising in the court told me this, and that Pater would pat the dog's head and answer, "Yes, John, after a while"; when

John would stifle his impatience with another nap.

John as house-dog companioned an out-door collie named Tony Weller. Between the two lay an unswerving affection and days in the colder months, when John stayed at home, Tony would come upon the porch and invite him to go hunting—for Tony was excessively fond of the Nimrod business. In such weather they commonly planned their chase through the long windows (Tony on the outside, as I said, John within with forepaws on the window sill and hind feet on the floor,) and by varying their tones, turning and twisting eyes and ears and heads, wagging tails, lolling out tongues and making other subtle motions of the body, seemingly fitted details to a T; sometimes they even rubbed their noses on the window pane, but that may have been due to their anticipations of pleasures of the chase. Friends seeing their antics for the first time could hardly believe our explanation; "Tony is asking John to go hunting."

Tony did not initiate these expeditions. Before Tony's day Sir Nicholas Tubbus, a liver-colored, short-haired hunting dog had played the game with John—he earned the name of Sir Nicholas because as a puppy he was the vera



ould Nick, and Tubbus on the ground of his being a vat, a tub, for food, sometimes licking his platter clean and then curling round it and groaning from repletion. But Tubbus was more saturnine in preparing for the chase; in accord with the heavy, wordless, melancholy disposition common to those who eat large meals and chew their food little. Tony's Scottish vivacity and vigor gave more color to hunting preliminaries.

When they had settled as to the sally, John's habit was to ask whoever chanced at hand to open the doors for him, and the twa dogs would trot away side by side. In colder weather they would commonly make a bee-line for a corn-field, and to some shack where rabbits had set up a bunny nursery and housekeeping.

At this juncture the cleverness of their planning became still clearer to mere humans, for John, much the smaller of the two, would enter the hole the rabbits had made in the shack, and upon his burrowing the game would start forth—leaping into the lion's mouth, poor rabbits! For Tony, waiting in intense excitement at the door of the passage, caught each one and broke its back.

Oftenest they would bring what booty they had bagged up to the house, and, with gleaming eyes and considerable appearance of fatigue, lay

it on the ground. John would then paw at a door, and on entering would attract attention by looking steadfastly in the face of whomsoever he found and running to door or window—inviting to a view of the chase's trophies, that is. The hunters' gratification lay in their receiving approving pats and hearing themselves called "good boys" for their help in reducing the girdlers of young apple trees and other growths.

Little happening like these lightened our days.

### III

Oversight of land, increase of basket and of flock bring the homier things to a farm's family. My Father's frail body and life-long habits of study permitted little physical labor. Driving a pair of horses from the seat of a mower and reaper one summer morning I remember seeing him; and the few times the picturesque threshing machine set up its engine and broad chute beside the stone barn, he stood not far off counting bags of wheat and jotting in his diary.

So with other members of the family—our lending a hand to the farming came about only by some spontaneity, some whimsey. Every day the children who were at home drove off to

Laurel Town, preparing to enter, or already matriculated at the university. Treasures of other peoples, other centuries and other lands had captivated us; and our parents, loyal to the ardor for education inherited of their old New England blood, gave us free leash and furthered our zeal to their utmost.

Therefore, just as a story of a larger human society tells not only of its political economies, but also of its people's inward life, their spirit's wonder at this mysterious world, its beauty, its truth; so this half-told tale of the microcosm of a farm must, in some slight way, speak of the purely inward action of its dwellers. Mental and imaginative life to many natures is the best part of their days.

We were readers. Novels then appearing—of George Eliot, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Walter Besant, Victor Hugo and others—came to our hands; and periodicals from New York and Boston. For instance, every week we anxiously waited the serialized “Mystery of Edwin Drood.” And dark and unhappy was the June day that brought news of the passing of its author.

Charles Dickens dead! His pen fallen! How could all be as before! Why did the sun shine! Why the birds sing! That slender figure whose

every movement we had watched in hushed awe! That mellow voice to which we had rapturously listened! Never again to tell "The Christmas Carol"! Never again the laughter-moving trial of Bardell versus Pickwick! Why should he, wonder-worker, lie motionless at Gad's Hill, and weak and worthless lives cumber the earth? In the great scheme of justice how could it be?

But weeping under Kansas cottonwoods; questioning the sky; listening to the threnody of the winds' voices—tears never yet restored a maker of the magic of literature. Not even so long ago as when, in old Trinacria, his work-fellow lamented the end of the singing of Bion:

"Begin ye, Muses of Sicily, begin the dirge!"

Evenings on a farm are, or were, aptly lacking in vacuous liveliness, such entertainment as lighter, or merrier, natures afford. Our short hours were of reading and music. Our Mother had a voice of unusual sweetness and sympathy, and she sometimes sang with us, in the *carmina sacra* we Americans inherit from colonial forebears, parts she had known in her childhood in the city of New York.

Other times Pater would, with piano accompaniment take "Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled," "Bonnie Doon," "Mary's Dream,"

"Sweet Afton" and a hundred others. Then, too, he had humorous solos, such as "Vilikens and his Dinah," and American melodies like "Uncle Ned," "Nelly Gray," "Old Folks at Home," and the soft-voiced

"On a floating scow of Ole Virginy,  
I worked from day to day,  
A-fishin' amongst the oyster-beds,  
To me it was but play.  
But now I'm old, and feeble too,  
I cannot work any more;  
So carry me back to Ole Virginy,  
To Ole Virginy shore."

From one book, so aged that its music stood in "buckwheat" notes, we took English martial tunes, as "The Moonlight March," with Bishop Heber's

"I see them on their winding way,  
About their ranks the moonbeams play;  
Their lofty deeds and daring high,  
Blend with the notes of victory;  
And waving arms and banners bright  
Are glancing in the mellow light."

I speak with particularity because I have heard foreigners, in our country to gain a better living than they could get in their birthlands, by speech and mannerisms constantly endeavoring to assure us that *they* were not Americans—I

have heard salad-minded foreigners (the salad suffering an overdose of vinegar) repeatedly declare we Americans had no music, "except Yankee Doodle," before they projected their shallow egotism in our midst.

My sister played with no little brilliance concert pieces then in vogue, and had for her field Scottish melodies and Chopin's nocturnes; while I ranged in Irish and German songs and Beethoven's sonatas. English folk-songs and adaptations from operas we divided. Wagner's music was then wandering to us in fragments; which grew more meaningful when Mr. J. R. G. Hassard filled the old *New York Tribune* with analyses of the first Bayreuth "Ring of the Nibelungs."

Evenings, too, and on Sunday afternoons, Pater would now and then read aloud—I recall times he chose the Book of Job; certain Psalms; Hamlet; Pope's "Essay on Man"; Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night" and "Tam O' Shanter;" poems of Thomas Hood about Dame Eleanor Spearing's trumpet, "The Elm Tree," "Miss Killmansegg and her Precious Leg"; and stories from Irving.

Along with my Father's view of life, and love for the fundamentals of life, lay unswerving devotion to truth and loathing of pretence and

shams. This, with him, included an abhorrence of the intellectual dishonesty which twists and distorts words from their commonly accepted meaning, and cloaks itself in phrases that cant or conceal their real significance.

In those times, almost fifty years ago, every day saw publication of age long hypotheses upon our world's evolution. Now, at first blush, those hypotheses seemed to war with the prevalent theology. Therefore their popularization met many an anathema from short-sighted or fear-stricken ecclesiasts; who rose as a man to the defense of Pliny.

Theories of evolution went on winning, however. They appealed to those seeking enduring foundations, and not endeavoring to square their reasoning to some evanescent dogma. They appealed to thinkers in fundamental truths who were sure to create the spiritual atmosphere of heirs of the anathematizers—heirs who have now come to realize that the hypotheses endow our earth, and all it carries, and has carried, with a divinity beyond the vision of any arrogance; spiritual heirs whom I (so great changes may one life witness!) lately heard preaching from a pulpit of old Trinity, New York, on Hebrews, xiii, 2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels un-

awares;" "angels," the sermon explained, being current theories of evolution and "Darwinism."

In all the then ferment and stir, calm thinking ruled at our house—to those standing firm on truth, first "angels," and ultimately all peoples come. Of the Eternal Power

"Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above."

we spoke not readily. But the mighty works of that Power we watched with unceasing awe and interest. Darwin's books, and Huxley's, and Tyndall's, found ready readers with us; no where more interested discussers. We brought the teachings into various, although necessarily minor, relations. For instance, Pater now and then called our attention to coloration in plants and animals, and constantly taught us to reason towards causes from effects.

One occurrence, but I hasten to add exceedingly minor, rises to memory at this moment:—A September morning, the sun burning through a light, veiling fog, as he and I were driving I exclaimed, "I smell tuberoses in the wind."

"Let us keep to the scent till we find them," he answered.

At last we came upon a field of

"The sweetest flower for scent that blows."



"A field of tuberoses!" I cried, amazed at the exotic opulence of the acres. It seemed as if an aromatic plain or fragrant garden of Lallah Rookh unfolded before us; or better still the Feast of Roses at Cashmere.

"To sell," the owner answered with occidental practicality, telling how he raised bulbs to market in colder latitudes.

Another day I found a dried field-mouse on the thorn of an osage-orange hedge, and we studied how a butcher-bird had probably caught the little pilferer and impaled it against his needs.

Many were such learnings.

#### IV

Men who kept our farm in order came mainly from the north of Europe. Their bodies, stunted and brawny, testified how generations of forebears had labored unceasingly and suffered lack of food; calling to your mind vegetation in Arizona—you saw they had grown to strange forms just as cacti do eking out a living in hostile environment. Even their faces were muscular, and often looked as if carved from gutta percha, or mahogany.

Of all the best was Nielson, a nutty little native of the fiord land—silent, ably executive, whose countenance now and then relaxed, when a smile would push through wrinkles about the eyes, trickle down his cheeks till it settled about the mouth; and the smile's meaningfulness made up for the face's prevalent apathy.

Nielson had a singular power. He loved animals with an intensity I have never seen in any other human. Wooden and stolid towards the world at large, with a sort of ashamed suppression of self, this doubtless, also, a result of centuries of oppression—a status you could not call stoic calm, for stoic calm connotes intellectual refinement—he would, when he thought no one saw him, hug a horse, lay his head alongside a cow's neck, and squeeze a satin-bound pigling till it squealed. Or, his strange power may have come from his music. From a mere mouth-organ I never heard its equal.

Often of bright Sunday mornings—like those a Nova Scotia nurse used to describe in her poetic Scotch accent as “God's own glory is in the air *this* morning”—often of a Sunday morning, he would go off to the north meadow with this Pan-pipe of his, and draw forth melodies of his native land and others picked up here, walking about among the animals. Having gained

their attention, or perhaps made them aware of his comradeship, he would set off marching in military gait up and down the sward.

His intimates would fall in line behind him, and he would seemingly swerve them where he chose. He would circle a high-set windmill tirelessly pumping sweet water for their drinking troughs. They would follow. He would go round an old oak, haunt of red-winged blackbirds, then down through the ravine. They after him.

First in line came Miggles, a well-bred filly with ways as graceful and coaxing as a kitten's—for whenever you went into her close, she would hasten to you with a bowing motion of her head, and walk about with you, her nose-tip on your shoulder. If you were to explain her by human reasoning, you would say it was an odd, quizzical pose of hers, that nose-tip on the shoulder business, springing from confidence in and warmheartedness towards you. Equinely, also, it may have been that. When she was at it, she seemed to be pouring loving gossip in your ear, even if she spoke none other than the language of the Houyhnhnms.

Trailing in line after Miggles came Dick. Then Nick the roadster, and Betsy Bobbit, a nervous little creature with a vindictive eye and anarchistic notions in her small head. Then Fanny Fire-

fly, as fine a buckskin mare as ever laid back ears and hastened her gait if she heard a wagon ahead of her. Then other horses, four or five of them.

Next came the mules. Poor, patient beasts! For some reason they never associated with the horses. Somehow social lines were as clearly drawn in their meadow as in the bigger world of men. You never saw a simple-minded, melancholy-faced mule hobnobbing with a sleek, blue-blooded horse. The two of them, mule and horse, fed in different patches, and seemingly endured each other's company—just as humans do when conventions enslave them.

After the mules the cows dragged their slow feet. Shorthorns mainly; but a couple of Jerseys and a native or two had crept in. Between these thorough-breds and plain-rangers, however, lurked no smug airs of upper and lower, no snobbery. Together they grazed and ruminated. Together they sought the watering troughs in the noontide heat. Together they huddled when the wind suddenly veered and a fierce norther struck down from the upper airs. And now they marched in mixed file to Nielson's music, yet so far along the line that their ears must have been very sensitive to catch the melodies' beat.

Oddest of all, perhaps, were the sheep. Whether they have a sense of rhythm I do not know. Yet they, too, sometimes fell in with the parade. Perhaps, in a silly, mutton-headed way they wanted to do as the bigger folk of the meadow did. At any rate they ambled along in Nielson's trail, heads down, as if in reflective mood, and tails sometimes wagging like mad.

But Miggles was always at the head, and following close after Nielson, the conjurer—he blowing through his pipes of Pan like a west wind through a harp, and swinging his legs just as later I saw *soldaten*, new at the goose-step, swing theirs on the *Truppen Uebungs Platz* near Berlin.

How, one again wonders, could Nielson have gained this power of leadership? Through his fondling each particular friend? Or, in this marvellous world of ours, and its mysterious life, did these people of the meadow recognize in him some sib, some creature akin, which our more evolved senses were too dull to perceive; and did they honor relationship they felt by fidelity to his will?

No one can tell. But so ran history upon the bottom-land of our farm hard by Laurel Town, when cardinals whistled "What cheer?" in February; and, too, when summer cuckoos cried over

sunlit blue grass and timothy. Under Kansas skies a minor re-acting of that wonder-worker of Greece, whose legend has brightened all centuries since the hour, when

“Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves, when he did sing.”

One September the farm and all its dependent people I was in charge of. I felt the responsibility unceasingly, and, up and about early of mornings, one day I stood studying the egotism of a peacock as he danced before his mate, in and out a row of hemlocks on the uplands by the house. His splendid attire, his strut and vanity and topping rhythm called to mind certain bewigged, belaced, velvet-coated, silk-stockinged ancestors I had read of—his wings sweeping at and beating the ground serving for sword-clank—

When an old Sante Fe cattle-train came grinding down the track. The train roared with exhaustion, for she had made hundreds of miles with least possible overhauling, aiming for Kansas City stock yards and rest.

Through the early air, above the creak and rumble of worn iron, the engine screeched primeval *A*. Cottonwood leaves, and willow,

down by the spring, quivered at the ear-splitting note; and limestone ridges, lying west, barked back *A—A—A* over dew-drenched grasses.

For some reason of the moment I turned from the peacock to watch the train through the morning's horizontal shafts of sunlight, the yellow clarity of the early fall.

Suddenly a door of one of the cars slid along its groove. In the opening bristled horns. Bodies bearing the horns came in sight—bodies leaping and landing on the railway embankment.

The train rolled on towards Laurel Town just round the curve.

Texas steers!—stunned by a leap; but free. There they stood, a bit shaky in leg, and as if endeavoring to sense their freedom. Then, seemingly mastering the fact, up went horns and heads and out went tails. Bellowing they started for the river over a stretch of corn stubble; and on to where the waters of the Kaw shot their light through the timber.

Others had seen the roisterers—three farm-men not far from where I was standing, and they, too, shared my alarm. Nielson, gifted with brains and best of workers; John shy as a weasel, good at his work but sulky with the sour, wordless sulkiness I have seen in landmen from Scandinavia; and Ole, whose thick blood hatched

megrims, which megrims hatched mental distortions, which distortions hatched lies and love of shirking.

All four of us, I say, eyed the raiders. Out on the plains from where those fellows came "Texas fever" had been raging, and cattle dying by thousands.

The imported Shorthorns down in their yard below I grew anxious for. How happy and peaceful they looked!—nosing golden pumpkin, crunching red-corn breakfasts, holding their heads on a line with their bodies as they munched and lifted up their eyes in gustatory satisfaction, their heavy tongues now and then lapping drooling lips. What a picture of contentment!

Texas steers might do for these Shorthorns what a boy does when he carries scarlet fever, or other infection, to his school.

Plainly enough the Texans were bent on battle. They had suffered horribly, doubtless, shut, cramped, stifled in that terrible prison, an old-fashioned cattle-car. They ached for motion, for light, air, water, food. Ceaseless roar, jar and jostle, had disordered their whole being.

There they stood in the distance, soaking their dry hoofs in the river's edge. How long would they keep at it?



But even now they were turning about, blowing the air from their lungs and coming up to recross the railway. A field of clover lay before them. "Hungry, probably" we mused. "They will pasture".

The marauders were far hungrier for motion, for equalizing action, for stretching their legs. Energy prompted their every step. The first fence they reached they stuck their heads through and sent its wires flying as if they were tow twine.

Next the clover field lay a ravine, flooded when the river rose high; at other times empty save for rabbits and chipmunks at housekeeping, and coveys of quail and prairie-chicken hiding in its matted grass.

Through this gully the Texans charged and up its hither bank, their horns set for battle. Even at our distance we seemed to see their muscles twitching and nostrils dilated. Four hundred feet more and they might stand at the cattle-yard, their horns possibly ripping off its palings.

"Oughtn't we to shoot the raiders?" asked one of the men.

"A pity if we had to!"

"Some train-men must have seen them open the car-door", suggested another, "and now the

freighter has side-tracked at Laurel Town, they'll send cowboys to corral the lot."

"Meanwhile, will the Texans disseminate the fever?"

Minutes seemed long as we reflected.

"A man's mad", said Nielson, with his hesitating, wistful, old-world-soil-tiller's smile, "a man's mad sometimes goes away when he's had a full meal. May be it's the same with Texas steers. Let's try and see".

So the three seized corn knives, and ran to fodder stacks, and fell to work; cutting up sweet pumpkins, forking green stalks of corn at the feet of the strangers before our cattle-yard gates.

The rough steers paused and sniffed the fragrant food. One daring fellow ran out his tongue and curled it back loaded with pumpkin. He was quite the runt of the lot; a blind hog finding the acorns.

The steer liked the fruit. Another made the same venture. He wanted more. Another tried. Then another. Till, at last, by the end of, say, half an hour, when ponies carrying cow-punchers came racing up the main-traveled road, there down in the bottom stood a row of rugged-brown backs—Texas steers, crunching sweet, green corn-stalks and golden pumpkins. Seemingly no

steer in the world ever tasted anything so good. They could not hold from eating long enough to whip their tails at the busy flies of September.

Mild-eyed and conquered. Their feet they had softened with water. Aching throats they had wet. Empty paunches they had filled with luscious, emolient pulp. The terrors of their cattle-car, its crowded space, its racking noise, they had forgotten. They went off tamely at the crack of the cowboys' whip.

From the Texans' raid no harm greater than a caging in the stone barn came to our Shorthorns, and loss of one day's sunshine on their round sides.

## V

Not one American housewife, probably, but has longed for such golden girls as Homer sings, those rolling, likable lassies Hephaestus forged, according to accounts in the eighteenth book of "The Illiad"—"good sense, and speech, and strength they had, and crafts they learned from the immortal gods."

Just such maids we craved at the house my Mother conducted. Yet Hephaestus made us nothing of the sort. Instead we had manifold

human *factota* who hardly ever seemed golden; not infrequently, it is true, silvern; and then at times substantially brazen.

The aunties were most individual—negro women, more or less dark, gifted with legends and faithfulness of mammies of the old days; in every instance born and bred in slavery, the sole echo to us of whatever poetry, whatever love, devotion and human worth may have lain in that institution. Full of strength and truth in the great turns of life; full of beautiful earnestness; trustworthy in large events, what unaccountable perversions they sometimes suffered in the small!

One “coffee-and-cream”, Spanish-eyed, little body and cheery soul often called to my mind Homer’s epithet of Aethiopians, *blameless*. For downright dependability Mary was golden. But if verity were the point, between what happened and what she fancied you never could tell.

One seventeenth day of March some one passed our windows wearing a sprig of green. Mother, seeing the shamrock, exclaimed, “Mary, this is St. Patrick’s day!”

“Yes’m, I know”, answered Mary, ready as any polyhistor, “I was here when they buried him”.

“But Mary”, said Mater with a smile—

"Oh, well", broke in Mary hurriedly, "if it wasn't him, it was one of his representatives". Then with introspective eyes and smiling mouth, as if in mental enjoyment of the past, she added her clincher, "They had a great time".

Wish never to fail to rise to the occasion, and the tenacity of her conceptions came out again and again; pose of the utterer of oracles is not confined to the learned alone.

One evening, as I entered Mater's room to hasten Mary's recreation hour, I pointed to the red and gold of the western sky saying, "What a wonderful sunset!"

"Yes'm", answered Mary, turning her eyes so the light fell into their liquid depths, "The sun sets in the north to-night". Then with grave voice and solemn manner, "It's a sure sign of rain".

"Why, Mary", my inexperience answered, "the sun always sets in the west."

"Well, I've noticed", rejoined Mary, with calmness and dignity, her brown-velvet hands slowly smoothing the tea-tray cover and pulling it even on all four sides, "I've noticed that before a storm the sun *always* sets in the north."

To answer would contravene *ex cathedra* utterance. Like all dogmatists Mary thought that insisting on a thing made it true.

The dear old bully shuffled off toward the kitchen, from the distance coming her song:

"My soul is like a new tin pan,  
Lord, grease it with thy grace;  
And rub, and rub, and rub, dear Lord,  
Till I can see thy face."

A son-in-law, whom Mary proudly described as "professor on the banjo", used to come to the kitchen-door days when her pay was due and ask her for her wages—this ne'er-do-well taught her words and melodies.

Mary expressed other striking cosmological notions, stoutly asserting "the moon's a woman, wife of the sun; haven't you noticed how changeable she is?"

Which recalls, if we may wander so far, a fancy of another old-time slave. Wondering at the beauty of the world, and reasoning upon it with all the knowledge his poor life could muster, he told me, with solemnity of countenance showing intellectual effort back of it, that the stars were knot-holes and gimlet-holes in the floor of heaven, and their light the glory of paradise shining through. That their light is the glory of heaven shining through, none but an unimaginative scientist would deny.

Born to the purple of a house-slave near New Orleans, Mary practiced an unconscious snob-

bery—snobbery is commonly unconscious—and looked down on field-workers, such as Peter Vinegar; whose ear so loved a sonorous phrase that it led him to name his heir (the child did not long survive), Americus Disgustus Dapoleon Vinegar.

Of all our aunties, most characterful, I think was Phyllis, plumb full of racy expressions, a natural narrator, and never tired telling her experiences, in slavery and out. Through it all, her eyes had been wide open, ears listening, judgment sane. I still see her serious, yellow-brown face, high shoulders covered with gingham of a generous old-time-plantation cut; and her brave hands freckled a deeper brown, in hours of rest placidly folded in her ample lap. Such speaking hands! What work they had done for field, for house, for pickaninny! She was not a clever, slender, golden girl of the Hephaestean type, but her face and figure might have served as model for a nineteenth century Moroni or Frans Hals.

“Yes’m, I had sixteen children. My mother had only twelve. But my aunt had fifty-nine grandchildren, and eighty-five great grandchildren before she died”. Slavery believed in breeders.

After their shackles had fallen, she and her

husband had gone to that legendary country once called "the Great American Desert". "But dust and sand storms was so bad we feared the children would lose their way to school, and in winter snow druv so heavy they couldn't go. Why, sometimes it was so cold that fat hogs froze half way down the back, and we had to kill and ship 'em on to a Kansas City soap factory.

"We kept warm by burning cornstalks and hay—had burners large enough to burn a bale of hay, and three bales lasted one day. What was the burners made of? Sheet iron; and they covered the stove and burnt underneath. We cooked in the oven. Why, we ran mills two years by burning hay, had two men feeding all the time. For summer fires we used to go to the corn fields and pick up a load of stalks.

"One thirtieth of April oats was in and up, when a hail-storm came and poisoned the ground—packed it so nothin' didn't grow that year. The storm killed chickens, too, and sucking pigs; and my son-in-law went out to Cheyenne bottom and gathered a wagon-load of dead sea-gulls and all kinds of birds; sea-gulls come before a storm and rise down and rise up and fly graceful-like".

Full of the traditions and beautiful lore of folk who have lived in and by the field, "Taint



no use denyin'", she one day declared, "that chicken-weed grows where chickens is, or have been. And you always find mullein where sheep feed; and iron weed springs up in a horse-pasture. It's as true as day".

Aunt Phyllis sang many a melody in the velvet accent of her race—songs she had caught up in youth when one warehouse stood where Kansas City now stands, and "wa'n't nobody in western Missouri but Mormons and Indians". The humor of her songs forecast that of present-day vaudeville. One, possibly referring to the company of a packet plying between St. Louis and Westport, Aunt Phyllis usually prefaced by proclaiming: "There's more married now than's getting along well";

Four score and ten a verse,  
Not a penny in a purse,  
Something must be done for us,  
Poor old maids!

We're all of the Desman crew,  
Dressed in yellow, pink and blue,  
Nursing cats is all we do,  
Poor old maids!

To the devil we do go,  
The bachelors will be there, too,  
Each of us will have a beau,  
Poor old maids!"

Another Westport song of Aunt Phyllis's exhorted to temperance:

"I went down street the other night,  
And there by the corner there lie an old friend;  
I spoke to him, but 't wa' n't no use,  
For he knew no more of me than a goose.  
So, come and jine our cold-water band,  
Come and jine our cold-water band,  
And we'll unite hand in hand."

Still another referred to political divisions:

"The moon was shinin' silver-bright,  
The stars with glory crowned the night,  
High on that limb that same old coon  
Was singin' to hisself this tune;

Get out the way, you're all unlucky,  
Clear the track for old Kentucky;  
Fiery, southern, brave Calhoun,  
Who beats the fox, and fears the coon;  
Let that track be dry or mucky,  
We'll clear the track for old Kentucky;  
Get out the way, you're all unlucky,  
Clear the track for old Kentucky."

Then Aunt Phyllis had other verses worthy of a Mother Goose anthology:

"De raccoon hab a ringy tail,  
De possum's tail is bare;  
De rabbit hab no tail at all,  
But a little bit o' bunch o' hair."

"De possum and de raccoon  
Went up de tree a-fightin';  
De turkey-hen she scratch so hard  
De gobbler died a laughin'."

"Possum up a gum stump.  
Raccoon in de hollow;  
Pretty gal at Dinah's house  
Fat as she can wallow.  
Possum shank a'roastin',  
Wid de marow in de bone;  
Pretty gal at Dinah's house—  
And Dinah ain't to home."

"Dey tie my feet, and tie my hand,  
And dey lay me down upon de sand;  
De skeeters come and eat my clothes,  
And bite my ears and tickle my nose;  
Dey leab me dar till I weep and moan,  
And swear I'll let dem pullets alone."

## VI

Answering a message that our Mother would welcome a strong, trustworthy woman for cleaning—Mater tabooed the word servant because of its old associations and the hostilities the word engenders—answering this call for a household orderly, sent to a tenement where folks from Sweden met, there appeared as odd a compound as you would be apt to find in all the human lees Europe has cast through Castle Garden or Ellis Island; Mary Peterson, stunted in

stature, a trifle bent in shoulders, as thirty-six-years-old workers we Americans import are apt to be, but having a skin textured and colored like a blush rose, hair as fine as floss-silk and of the dye of gold, eyes small, deep-set, a tip-tilted nose and a protruding chin; such countenance as legend has given witches and other psychically abnormal creatures.

A strange and picturesque vision! Yet, in the analysis of practical, Kansas sunlight, winning; perhaps by a broad kindliness, even if somewhat of the elf, somewhat of the fool, somewhat of the seeress shone in the face.

Mother engaged her at once. Smiling she turned and trudged off to town for her clothes, later setting forth these riches—underwear of the thickest linen we had ever seen, heavy, woolen stockings, skirts woven of wool wadded in so firmly that it made the cloth clumsy and stiff.

But under those terrible wearables such a willing heart! Mater held her back a day or two till she had clad her in light cottons fitting our climate, and then the new recruit fell to her adept's scouring and cleaning. Learning our language after her own methods, she would point to some object and ask, "Dis?" And when one answered, for instance, "tongs", or "table", she would go on with her work, repeating to

herself "tongs," "table", till she had driven a furrow through her brain and planted the word in it.

To distinguish her from a household-helper already established, she must have another name than Mary. "Venus", we children wickedly insisted. But when Mater explained the difficulty of having two Marys in one house, and asked the new comer's wishes, suggesting Peterkin, or Peter, for her special ownership, she delightedly said either would be right; and Peter and Peterkin she was through all remaining time.

Eighteen years, off and on, she stayed with us. Truth compels "off and on". She had an adventurous head, possibly you might say she had intellectual curiosity working behind the weird, elfin light that shone in her eyes. Recurrently, after a year or two of domestic ease and routine a *wanderlust* would seize her and she must off to some town whose name had struck her fancy. A few months never failed to bring her repentant to the door, begging to be taken back, averring "no place so good as dis".

Among the Swedes who came over about her time, she soon got a reputation for riches. What her thrift saved, and it was much of her earnings, she turned into twenty dollar gold pieces; which she hastened to lay in crevices of her bed-

stead. This method of banking seemed so facile and clever that she confided her device to the cook, whom the hand of the Lord has stained ebon. Then, a few days after, she cried out that she had lost an eagle. A wave of war rolled one minute from the kitchen.

When Mater heard of the safe-deposit, and of the confidences, she told Peterkin she must lock up her treasures and herself keep the key. So Peter bought a trunk pasted over with yellow-brown paper and rimmed with sheet iron. But it had the dignity and individuality of a lock, and delighted her simple soul beyond telling.

Still, riches engender sorrow. No surcease has ever come to that law; older even than the days of Solomon. Nor did it fail now in Peter's experience. Her savings, not her many virtues, brought suitors. Stolid Swedes, whom she met at her country-people's houses, where on Sundays she sought social refreshment—gruff, silent, sour-visaged fellows they looked as they shuffled towards our house, came courting.

In their first visit, say on a rainy Sunday afternoon, they evinced their interest and confidence in her, Peter afterwards told us, by subtly suggesting that her years warranted a home of her own. What female of the human species could withstand such a hint! At their

second coming, say a short call in a week-day afternoon, they broached the subject of marriage. On the third they completed their proposal, and asked the loan of a gold-piece, or two.

Peterkin's weird eyes could not see the meaning of it, and through several years vari-colored scoundrels played with her earnings; not to speak of her affections.

At last appeared the slickest of them all—more refined than the others in looks, with better clothing, better shoe-leather, longish hair and a weary, sickly, dissatisfied face. "Bottinson" paid his sweetheart many visits, and wheedled her out of several hundred dollars before he went away and never came back.

Bottinson had finesse. With his fading into the unexplorable ended Peter's faith and trust in legal tenders for men. They had hurt her terribly. But she was game, poor, brave soul!—and when speaking to those who had known her history, and theirs, she was never quite done joking over their lies, and how silyly they had mulcted her purse.

Yet, Bottinson's desertion was nothing to what another day brought. A norther blew bleakly, fine-pelleted snow fell, but Peter flung herself upon a wood-pile and lay on its rough edges far into the dark, refusing all body-

nourishment and soul-comfort, conscious only of despair.

Back in Sweden she had left a father, sister and brother living together in the little cottage they owned. Possibly all the family were afflicted with Peterkin's mental queernesses. At any rate that winter-day in Kansas, letters and papers came telling how her sister had one night made milk-porridge for father and brother, and in the porridge had boiled matches. The two men, tired and hungry from work in excessive frosts, ate a hearty supper. Both died before morning.

Their bodies were laid in such graves as the country-folk in Sweden prepare during summer for possible needs when frosts harden the ground. The sister dwelt alone. Yet not alone. The conscience of her soul awoke. Her father stood before her and told her of her sin. She could not withstand the accusing spirit. In a fortnight she set out for town to make known how she had coveted ownership so far as to kill her men-folks to whom the law gave the little house and land. A judge took testimony referring to the strength of her mind, and finally confined her for life in the city, confiscating her freehold to the crown.

Out in a Kansas blizzard the old story of



crime not striking the criminal alone was enacting. Innocent Peterkin, thousands of miles from the tragedy, sat in the numbing cold, wringing her hands and now and then uttering cries like a wounded animal's, paralyzed by grief and shame. Her father and brother dead!—and dead in a way that blood of hers befouled itself!

In her agony dreams of paying a visit to Sweden and carrying help to the old home vanished. Ever after Sweden was to her a forbidden name, and forbidden land. American she wanted to become; in many ways did become. Even the white light of her birthland faded from her face; in course of years her skin tanned to a brown, and the exquisite gold of her hair turned to ash shades.

Peterkin had characteristics we Americans admire in the land-folks of northern Europe. She had simple, direct honesty. She had self-restraint. Considerations of others' rights and needs had socialized her. She was conscious of, and felt pride in maintaining her self-reliance; pride, also, in doing her work finely and with great cleanliness. Consequently she had severity of bearing—any human may easily be good-natured if he has nothing to do but be good-natured; if he has no ideal to serve. Hon-

esty, self-reliance, cleanliness and even severity—all were in keeping with her simple, cool, rationally tintured religious phases.

Perhaps ancestral-seeress proclivities got hold of her after we left Laurel Town. At any rate she passed to the emotionalism of the Salvation Army. Her zeal to labor for her new friend led to her hawking about the *War Cry*. Or perhaps the Army set her the task, recognizing the quaintness of her face and figure and her ready tongue.

A favorite song of hers in her unregenerate days she would begin with

"Shoo, fly!  
Bod-der me!"

This now gave way to another evolved in the enthusiasm of the barracks, leastwise a favorite at that time;

"There are no flies on you;  
There are no flies on me;  
There are no flies—"

the song went on, citing the Religious Example; triumphantly concluding with,

"So far as we can see."

Begging she learned to benefit others. The habit remained when her fervor for the Army cooled. At last we heard that she was meeting

people of a morning with "Gi'e a penny!" Astonishing!—and yet one vagary of a life of mental wanderings.

Society and Peterkin were now at variance. Indeed society had never understood Peter. Doubtless society did not understand those old seeresses who were her ancestors. But society did not longer uphold Peter. Nor did Peter uphold society. The lonely, old soul knew she was down and out. But she kept a room for herself, to which she took wood she gathered, and garments given in charity; till, finally, under an August sun she fell unconscious in an alley.

A singular compound! Faithful as a dog, and yet at times treacherous; perhaps the treachery developed when her mental weaknesses recurred. Keenly honest in her dealings, and repeatedly the dupe of thieves and their absurd pretences. Proud of herself and her good name, yet at last a daily beggar. Kindly, quaint, independent, joying in life with a very genuine joy. A child of old northmen, and, still more clearly, old northwomen.

## VII

Those I have here bespoken the amplitude of our farm next Laurel Town embraced. Natu-

rally we had neighbors not of the farm, the greater number known as "mud-floor Missourians," natives of the richly gifted state to the east, who retained such liking for their old habits that, report said, no matter how roomy the house their affluence had come to afford, they loved best to live so that their bare feet might press the maternal soil.

Such tales seemed to us very curious. Also doubtful. Experience confirmed the truth of at least one.

I dropped a rain-coat from the phaeton, and having heard that the family of a large brick house hard by had picked it up, I went to their front door and rang the bell. In vain. But I so wanted to get back my coat that I walked toward the rear of the house seeking another entrance. A pair of dogs sallied from the elms' shade. Their bark brought to a cellar door the tall, bare-footed, Indian-featured mistress of the manse. Behind her opened a large room, seemingly serving as kitchen and living-room, all comfortably floored with Mother Earth.

When I told my errand, the dame handed me the coat, accepted my thanks with a nod of the head, and said, "We knew the cloak was you-all's 'cause nobody hyerabouts has one like it.

But we thought we'd keep it till you-all come for it."

Missourians living in Kansas still retained no little of the hatred they inherited from days\* when Kansas was the storm centre of national politics, and her history a fore-scene of the Civil War. They held themselves far from association with what their ginger speech called "the damned Yankees."

From their point of view, seemingly, those born in Missouri reached on birth the summit of earthly excellence and glory. The same sort of self-gratulation I have since heard in others—for instance, among people born in Boston, or its neighbor Cambridge. To live in a place consecrated by noble deeds is a great thing. But somehow our human minds can not help asking if such deeds should not quicken to like performance, not to self-complacent vaunting, passivity of the closed mind and folded hand, silly criticism of, or weak hostilities towards those born,

\*"It is evident that the time to try men's soul's has now come in Kansas. The villains who have gone there from Missouri, with clubs, bowie-knives and revolvers, to override the genuine settlers, and establish slavery at whatever cost, must now be met determindly." *Herald of Freedom*, Lawrence, Wednesday, June 9, 1855.

"No week has ever passed without . . . insult and contumely thrown at our people by our nearest neighbors, the Missourians," wrote the author of "Six Months in Kansas," in November, 1855.

or living, elsewhere. After all, through the centuries human nature has changed little—assumption of superiority, even of moral superiority, based on place of birth did not die out of the world when dwellers of cities famed and opulent aligned against people from a little town called Nazareth.

Another of our neighbors stood as far as the east from the west from the Missouri exclusives.

“With a porch at his door both for shelter and shade too,  
As the sunshine or rain may prevail;  
And a small spot of ground for the use of the spade too,  
With a barn for the use of the flail,”

Dr. Hartmann, a German physician educated in Austria, now a trifle weary of a busy world, sought retirement.

Traditions of gay Vienna, however, its “dolled-up” women, its wine, its song, spectred his life, and when handsome girls came visiting us, the Doctor would sometimes invite us to an afternoon hour at his house.

Smiling, evidently gratified at our coming, he would welcome us at the front of his vine-covered porch.

As for us, we were like a flock of wrens, or blue-birds, chattering about the flowers, trees and what-not till we found *Kladderadatsch*, *Fliegende Blätter* and other illustrated German

papers lying on tables of the veranda. Then, before we were fairly settled, the housekeeper would appear bringing German *kuchen* heaped on a plate, and German linen napkins about a yard square that we would half unfold and make do for plate and serviette.

At this juncture the Doctor, delighting in his hostship, would set forth a bottle of wine, wine he himself had made from his own grapes. There was the vineyard, he would point it out, not far from the porch. Of a beautiful claret color and sour, the wine saved little of the grapes' aroma; yet it was the real Bacchic inheritance, the way our ancestors, through thousands of years, kept fruit-acids for their winter health.

The Doctor, reaching a bottle towards our glasses, would meet our protest, "Just a spoonful, Doctor, to taste your vintage; you know we don't drink wine," and some teasing tale we had at hand, say a primitive legend from "Al-Mustatraf;"

"In the first days of the world, after Adam had planted the grapevine, Iblis (Satan, that is, may he be cursed!) sacrificed over it a peacock.

"And the vine absorbed its blood.

"Soon the leaves opened out, when Iblis, ever busy, offered up a monkey.

"The vine drank the blood.

"Later when the plant put forth its clusters, the Evil One led to it a lion for oblation.

"And the vine took up its blood.

"Then, at last, after the clusters ripened, Iblis drew near a swine and made sacrifice.

"The swine's blood the vine also drank.

"So now it is that he who drinketh of wine is first thrilled with the proud walk and parade of the peacock. Then, after a little, he becomes as gay and playful as a monkey. Later on the strength of the wine mounting, he grows wild and fierce, even as the form of a lion. And finally overcome, he falls and wallows in the mire as swine do, and sleeps unknowing mockery and derision."

"A very bad story!" the Doctor would assure us, and fall to regaling us with tales of European wine-presses, and of the great health and long life of drinkers of bottled-sunshine; after a time seizing a decanter.

"No, no, thank you, Doctor, no more, no more. You must send specimens of your wine to your old home and win fame for it."

"Now, my dear young lady," the Doctor would answer, still smiling and turning his head slightly on one side, gradually tipping the bottle; "Vy not? Ein man does not walk on



vun leg. Does he now?"—fastening us with his eye, but all the while pouring wine in our various glasses. "Tell me, does ein man valk on vun leg? You say you vill valk home. Vell, no vun can valk on vun glass vine; immer zwei. Und noch eins, a cane you know." And by that time he would have brimmed our cups.

The real German *Gemuthlichkeit*, you see. Its impressive *Allgemeinheit* drove me one day even to by-singing the great Goethe:

*Kennst du das Land?—wo die Lebkuchen blüh'n,  
Mit dunklem Bier die kühlen Steine glüh'n,  
Ein sanfter Wind vom grünen Garten weht,  
Pfannkuchen riecht, und hoch Wurst-suppe steht?  
Kennst du das Land?*

The Doctor, a bachelor many years, later on married a tiny, sweet-faced German widow. From the beginning she looked thoroughly subdued—recalling to my mind a sentiment about his wife from the Memoirs of an old New England preacher, somewhat known about Boston for his bullyragging; "She was a woman of incomparable meekness, towards myself especially."

The Doctor married. Yea; but his bachelor habits of issuing sultanic orders persisted; and the sequent life of himself and the winsome, wee lady did not brim with joy. At last the wife

left their domicile; and she, and the Doctor also, sought lawyers and begged for divorce proceedings.

Making ready to go before the court, their legal men one morning found a meeting necessary, and each by chance had his client with him. The lady and her husband were therefore in adjoining rooms. Each knew the other's nearness.

A clerk passing from one room to the other carelessly left the door open. Defendant and plaintiff sat facing each other.

Moved by the sad figure opposite—wondering perhaps who had carried in his coffee and rolls that morning—the little plaintiff, her love again aflame, sprang from her chair crying; *Mein Mann! Mein Mann!* and flying with outstretched arms towards the doorway.

*Meine Frau! Meine Frau!* returned the defendant, his heart full of a sentiment he could not uproot, and rushing through the entrance to the second room.

Their impact told the lawyers that the case of Hartmann vs. Hartmann must forthwith be taken from the docket. Nothing remained for the legal men but to felicitate the couple upon the settlement of their grievances, and wish their household unbroken happiness for all the years to come.



**CERTAIN WHO DWELT IN  
LAUREL TOWN**

## THE LITTLE CITY OF THE GHOSTLY HEART

*A little city, a meet human nest,  
Lies snug on teeming lands of Central West;  
Its houses, broadly parked with neighbors', stand  
Mid shrub and blossom, in a friendly band;  
And midst bird-haunted maples, trees so tall  
They seem like rows of pillars, or a wall!  
To lift the wide and open, sparkling sky  
By winter's sun-dogs, or July's red eye.*

*Such to a stranger's sense this city seems;  
And so to youthful students, when with dreams  
And hopes of gaining fruits of ages long—  
A self-reliant, heart-high, eager throng—  
They swarm in dwelling, lecture-room and street,  
And seize to-day, yet would to-morrow greet.*

*Democracy triumphant! For the state  
Set on this city's height learning elate,  
Its university—its trained, strong arm  
Stretched forth to succor, brain and heart to warm,  
Exalt the people's life and make for right  
Through all just works, and days of lucent light.*

*So does the little town in beauty rest;  
A fellowship building an ideal best;  
A gem on the telluric cloak of God;  
A wind-flower rising from its blue-grass sod.*

*But ever in this city's ways and shade  
There moves another band.*

*All unafraid  
From moss-soft mounds under broad oaks they come—  
Where blue-bird, thrush and squirrel make their home—  
And through the busy town they wander far,  
These souls without the grosser body's wear;  
And pass on restless, driven by the fire  
That burns in spirits who for others aspire.*

*For their young manhood lay in that far day  
When folk "went west" to work, and fight, and pray;  
When men embodied ancient English zeal  
For each man's right—the Puritan commonweal;  
The Puritan intensity of soul,  
Visions millennial, a new race to mould,  
These Anglo-Saxon state-makers then sought,  
And for their building their race-ideals brought.*

*To blaze a way, to make a trail, to plough,  
To plant, to build a city—never Now  
But ever toward the Future urged their will;  
And ever toward the future look they still.*

*O city of these future-yearning hearts!  
O leaf-clad town where youths' years now do lie!  
Thou hast in keeping many mounds of earth,  
And only those who know not pass them by;  
And misty beings ever go thy ways,  
And tell of years ago, and sing God's praise.*

*They gave themselves and stablished here their home—  
These ghostly men and women—and they come  
To watch right gain through fibre-strengthening strife;  
They are this city's very heart and life.*

*First soldiers buoyantly; then in between  
Their Colonel marches with a laughing mien;  
The Minister whose sermons counted far—  
But more his deeds among his people were;  
A Governor with territorial tales  
Of how he downed age-old, pro-slavery walls;  
A Judge, whose violet eyes still shade with pain  
His sentence—lest it fail the offenders gain;  
The Secretary who served Lincoln when he died;  
The Naturalist, whose saurian was his pride;  
Professor "Rob" joking in Latin speech;  
And gentle he, "Lord" D., who smiled on each;*

*Hearth-builders, too, with honor signs aloft—  
The trowel, straight-edge, plummet of their craft;*

*These, and still other souls, inebriate  
Of labor and of planting seeds of state;*

*And with them constant wives in even pace,  
Their homesick tears wetting a smiling face.*

*Soil-delvers, also, milkers of the kine,  
Planters of orchards and the fruitful vine;  
Their hair dishevelled, feet oftentimes splayed,  
Hands brown and horny, and their forms arrayed  
In dress ill-fit and faded—still they go  
With eyes reaping the future and aglow.*

*As when June winds drive from the southern seas,  
And strike the wan primroses' fragile ease,  
And each small bloom dips to its mellow soil,  
Yet rises, ghost-like, after the gust's toll;  
So this white folk, this city's heart and soul,  
Sway with a new day's zeal, a new time's toll,  
And yet pass ever singing old-times' joy and dole.*

*"Had we not fought defeat, and woe and death,  
Our haunts would hardly house your calmer breath;  
To serve the truth, to see that justice guides,  
That all are free, that equity abides—  
Had we not fought for this with all our powers,  
You here could build no safer life than ours;  
To make our word incarnate in our deed,  
This was our offering, and our highest meed."*

*Such are this city's heart. They realized  
Ideals for which the human spirit cried  
In swelling notes of Milton's sacred song;  
In Shelley's verse to right the whole world's wrong;  
In Arnold's ringing cry pressing to call  
"Hail to the victors lying by the wall!"*

*'So thou, O little town, thou purse of gold—  
Beyond the price of all that's bought and sold—  
Thou haunt of ghostly lives firm, free and bold;  
Thou dwelling, too, of lives bright, young, untold;  
Thou art a Land of Futures, place apart—  
A little city of State-building Hearts.*





## CERTAIN WHO DWELT IN LAUREL TOWN

### I

How the attractiveness of Laurel Town, its natural beauty, its people, the state's young university, led my Father to purchase land for a home adjoining the city, I have told in foregoing pages.

It was not then a town of the soft, quiet beauty of nowadays, but more rugged, more individual, possibly closer to the heart of things. Suffering even to martyrdom before and during the Civil War had graven its face with startling emphasis; it was a little city with its own physiognomy.

North and south had sent together its people: southerners marked with strong personal sentiment, an unvarying consciousness of self, and a social view that sometimes suggested the eighteenth century we find in English books; the

New England element, on the other hand, having its inevitable simplicity and directness. New England blood predominated, and especially affiliated with that from Ohio, Illinois and other western states and one or two generations removed from the Atlantic slope. New England characteristics were in the fore.

Therefore, to sketch the folks of Laurel Town as a body of unity and like color would not be true. The community was too newly gathered, too unlike in its elements, too nerve-fatigued by horrors of war; it was not yet closely enough knit by continuity of interests to have a general social spirit. Academic life which now stamps the town had not evolved. The university was a small institution struggling with legislature after legislature for its very breath, and with no appreciable influence on the social will. Still, even then Laurel Town was what a professor of Harvard University twenty years after told me he found it; "A New England town set in a western environment."

After our flight from the east, and we were established on the farm, those with whom Pater already had acquaintance, through his open-air-seeking life and rides about Laurel Town, paid our Mother formal visits. We came to know delightful people.

First, the family of Judge Welch of Litchfield, Connecticut. Mrs. Welsh had great taste for sociabilities, and after the habit of those times now and then entertained our family at tea; not our present four o'clock brew with sliced lemon and wafer, but the last hearty meal of the day. Her hospitality pictures itself before me yet—her table spread with damask linen hanging low, set about with cold meats, sour conserves, biscuits hot and steaming through a doily, and invariably at one side the cover cakes, and a tall, broad glass dish holding boiled custard flavored with bitter almond and flecked with white of egg beaten to a snow and centring flakes of currant jelly.

The hostess herself sat behind a shining silver tea service. A lucid memory and love of anecdotes made her the life of the party, her dark eyes sparkling as she related some tale of "Uncle Nott," a characterful president of Union College, or traditions of such ancestors as Philip van Schnyler who, about 1650, settled in Rensselaerwyck; of Anneke Jans, whose farm then lay in contest between Trinity Church of New York and her descendants; of Mary Dyer, last martyr of religious liberty for the Quakers on Boston Common in 1660.

At one of these teas our hostess told a story

which still lingers in my memory:—How, when a little girl and visiting relatives in Albany, she was dining with Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. An elderly man entered the hotel's dining room. A waiter gave him a chair at the table where Mrs. Hamilton and her youthful guest were sitting. At once Mrs. Hamilton's face became white, and she seemed deeply affected. Her discomposure told the steward of the *contretemps* and he changed to another table the late comer—Aaron Burr who, twenty-six years before, had shot Alexander Hamilton on the heights of Weehawken.

In those early summers of our farm-life near Laurel Town, the ladies calling on Mater commonly came in strict formality, as I said, and without the men of their family. They drove out in hacks, if they had not their own conveyance, and oftenest were clad in light-colored silks, soft greys, blues, greens and lavenders, the skirts full, reaching the ground and giving an affect of the wearers floating. We were past the hoop-skirt era. But the idea which brought the hoop-skirt forward still survived—the idea that skirts are to conceal and let escape no suggestion of women's nether extremities; not even the line of the knee to show. For a woman's dress to hint that the wearer had legs was, in

that mid-Victorian\* day, immodest; and some went too far as to say no trace of a foot should be seen.

In summer, diaphanous llama-lace shawls, white or black, pinned to the dress at the shoulders, half covered the gowns of these ladies; and in colder weather, velvet cloaks and paisley shawls. Light colored kid gloved their hands, and in the left they almost always carried, together with a lace-edged handkerchief, a card-case of mother-of-pearl, or ivory, or silver. Above their fine-spirited faces they wore filmy patches they called bonnets—betwixing apologies for the head-covering that Paul, still somewhat retentive of the Pharisee, demanded of women of unregenerate Corinth.

How differently we pay our visits nowadays; we of the serge or broadcloth suit, with a bonafide hat on our heads! The Time-Spirit has wrought changes for women—the word women tells the whole story. We are women; they were ladies, and many of them would have resented any other descriptive.

The converse of these dames commonly

\*Why we should repeatedly say "Victorian" when we speak of the time's fashions in dress is not clear. Most of the vogues of that day, for instance that of the "modest and pious crinoline," were due to the taste of the Spanish leader of the French court.

dropped to the lugubrious note of the anaemic woman; evidences they unconsciously bore to their shutting-off from the companionship and ideas of the world. They would talk of the advantages of their old home, its fine spaciousness, the narrowness and disadvantages of the new. But inanities of those who pass their days in parlors did not prevail. The optimism of founders and up-builders brightened these ladies, also. Hopeful lines of the mouth far outnumbered lines of despair. In a new commonwealth men and women are more exactly companions than where conventions rule, their needs of each other establishing interdependence.

Among those early visits Mrs. Shannon's stands clearest in memory. Governor Shannon, who had had a notable career as governor of Ohio, United States Minister to Mexico, and later governor of Kansas accompanied his wife. A late number of a magazine, *Harper's*, I think, lay on the table, and in it account of Tom Corwin and a campaign of his against Governor Shannon. Naturally our parents spoke of the article, and this led to the retelling of one of its stories—how the brilliant Ohioan met Mrs. Shannon in a stage coach, and on learning who she was paid her marked courtesies; and how,

when change of coaches came, and he was to take another line, the orator laid her baby Wilson on her lap with the remark that he would soon lay the old Governor as flat on his back as he was now laying the young governor; thus disclosing to Mrs. Shannon who the gentleman of cavalier politeness really was.

Still, of the callers that afternoon, I recall more plainly Sallie Shannon—the most beautiful human creature I have ever seen. Not attractiveness of color, but the higher beauty, exquisite proportion and expression, marked her in every way—a perfectly modeled forehead, nose and chin, delicately curved mouth and fine complexion, back of which shown limpid, lustrous eyes of grey and brown hair. She wore a close-fitting, black-silk frock (the family were in half-mourning), a band of tiny, white French roses forming the collar.

A little later on, when fame of her beauty had gone abroad, she paid the penalty public admiration exact, whether of poet, orator or a beautiful woman. Self-consciousness settled on her countenance. But at this day of which I speak, she was about eighteen, like a lily blossoming out of sheer loveliness. She bore herself with grace and the repose convents stamp, or at any rate stamped, upon girls bred in their cloisters.



In those days I did not know the artificiality, and her native beauty sent me, a flapper, into hushed wonder. I wanted to gaze upon her till her form and face were photographed on some sensitized tablet of memory—just as later I felt before the perfection of old sculpture.

In those days, too, we saw Mr. John Hutchings, and his winsome wife who had the gift of singing English, Scottish and Irish songs with their native simplicity and tenderness. At times Mr. and Mrs. Hutchings would bring friends, for instance the later lamented Elliot V. Banks, and then we delighted in stories told with striking clarity and conciseness; a quality springing, I fancied, from lawyers' practise in brief-writing.

One of these occasions an intense heat drove us out of doors, to the shade of an oak upon whose trunk a red-headed woodpecker kept recurrently drumming. Some one brought up the fact that the day was the centenary of the birth of Napoleon; and what the Corsican did, his love of the tinsel of feudalism, his rhetorical successes and the significance of his failure informed the talk that afternoon.

At another visit, an Independence Day dinner, our guests told how they fled the morning of Quantrell's raid, and, pointing towards acres

skirting the Kaw, said the tall corn of that rich loam saved their lives by concealing them as they ran.

## II

Sufferings of Laurel Town at the hands of its enemies and during its early years spoke through legends innumerable in our after-days. Let one alone bear witness; the story of a serviceable hoop-skirt.

Now, we know that a farthingale, as our foremothers of Queen Elizabeth's time called a hooped petticoat, a farthingale is hardly the best sort of a lorry for carrying valuables from a beleaguered city. In stirring old times of Queen Bess, and in the renewed fashion of Queen Anne's day, rumors now and then went abroad that a man had in great stress, for instance to save his life, been secreted in their ample coop or go-cart. I doubt not that farthingales, and women in farthingales, in those earlier centuries, did heroic deeds. Else women would not have been women. But the story of what this farthingale accomplished in Laurel Town, in Kansas, in the year 1863, is so good that it ought to have a headline all to itself. Therefore, will Mr. Printer kindly insert in small, black, fat caps;

### THE LEGEND OF THE SERVICEABLE HOOP-SKIRT

Quantrell and his band got into Laurel Town that morning of the 21st of August, 1863, without discovery. How they did no one ever could tell.

One report had it that Sallie Young was seen *ahorseback* in the early grey of the day, her pony loping over the level towards Franklin, and that she led in the chief and pointed out the houses of Yankee Free-Staters—all in memory of their youthful friendship over in Ohio. But the story had little credit among the clearer-minded. And from what I saw of Sallie Young years after, still a buxom woman in Governor Shannon's household, I should call the tale absurd.

Quantrell knew every inch of Laurel Town. In earlier years he had lived there. No one needed to point him the way.

That August morning, however, no one doubted Quantrell was in town. His two hundred and ninety-four "border ruffians", their chief at their head, came over the south-east prairie like a devastating whirlwind.

Daring and deviltry had marked these bushwhackers from the beginning of the Civil War.

Desperadoes all of them, they nested in the Sni hills near Kansas City, and from dense woods and impenetrable underbrush dashed out for raids. Then, after their plundering and burning, a superb horsemanship permitted their speedily racing back and concealing themselves, at times among the brakes of the Blackwater river, but more often in their fastnesses of lofty ledged bluffs alternating with deep ravines leading to the Sni and the Blue.

Such deeds as these of theirs Robin Hood is reported to have done in Sherwood Forest of England some seven hundred years ago, and in a milder manner; Robin and his outlaws aiming to dispense rude justice by robbing rich Normans and endowing poor Saxons. These bandits of the border of Missouri and its western neighbor carried on their guerrillas against every interest that sought to make Kansas a free state.

Laurel Town, that child-city, forty miles, say, from their ledged hills, had centered Free-State activities through the ten years of its existence. Its people had not hesitated to declare their stand for human freedom, their hatred of human slavery. Nothing more native to those times and places, therefore, than that border bands should make the town a target for their ill-will. Already they had tried to destroy it. And now, after

years of a vast, organized rebellion, they hated it with an intensity that only their own lurid invective could describe.

The law-abiding folks of Laurel Town knew this resentment. Through months they kept patrol, and took turns in night guard. But only lately an order had reached them to stack their guns in an armory. This night of August the little city lay without watchers—save the stars of heaven.

So it happened that Quantrell and his bushwhackers, bending forward on the neck of their mounts till each man seemed a part of the animal he strode—guiding the light-footed horses wholly by their legs, thus leaving both hands free to carry shooting irons—so it happened the bushwhackers rode through the early dawn into the sleeping city.

Whooping and firing of guns awakening them, the people of Laurel Town instantly knew the fortune of the assault. Who, also, its prey. Men sprang from their beds and ran for hiding places—to an empty barrel, to a wife's fruit closet, through a bulk-head door just as a bandit entered the house, pistol cocked, to shoot on sight any man there.

Not only murder; burning, too, must be essential in putting the town to extremes. Women

worked to quench fire eating its way up the sides of their houses ; and saw husband, or father, shot dead within touch of their hand. In one dwelling a stalwart outlaw laid lighted matches against curtains and other quickly ignited furnishings, while the housewife followed beating out blazes with her blistered fingers. Every excess of partisan warfare held sway.

On rising ground, over near the river, stood the Eldridge House, a four-story brick hotel. This summer-season many people housed within its walls—travelers from a distance ; men come to see the beauty of the country and the arduous, picturesque life of the young commonwealth ; then again, others looking for investments of idle money.

Among young couples living in the hotel were Mr. and Mrs. Tisdale ; he interested in far-reaching stage-coach lines ; she a sweet-faced bride, gifted with the liveliness and brightness of French blood, gifted, moreover, with every woman's wit in a dilemma.

This 21st day of August the beating of horses' hoofs and shooting of guns woke the lady from her morning slumbers. Sensing the cause, she at once began planning how to save her husband's business papers ; which she felt sure he would preserve if he were there.

How terribly near those whoops and yells sounded!

She opened her door to the public hallway in hopes of another's word and counsel. An acquaintance, Mr. Thompson from New York, at that instant came by. The two spoke together—the hotel must suffer the raiders' fury, probably its men killed and the building fired.

Like Mr. Tisdale, Mr. Thompson had papers of importance to the fortunes of himself and others. He told of his anxiety lest the records be destroyed.

"I have just taken my husband's from his secretary", said the lady showing bulky folios, "and I'll care for yours, too, if you wish".

"Can you?" asked Mr. Thompson hesitating.

"I am sure", cried Mrs. Tisdale. "But run. Take the ferry. Or swim".

"I'll bring the papers", rejoined Mr. Thompson. "I wish I could save some underwear", he added, hastening toward his room.

"You can't", cried Mrs. Tisdale nervously. "Fetch the papers; and clothes. I'll see what I can do. And run. Run for the river".

Mr. Thompson brought his belongings and fled.

Mrs. Tisdale turned back to her room and locked her door.

Silence now reigned in front of the hotel. The bushwhackers were parleying for delivery into their hands of the building and its people.

In the peace of these minutes Mrs. Tisdale hung her hoop-skirt from a nail, and with twine bound on the inner side of the steels all the legal papers in her care. Little pieces of underwear, half the comfort of living, she also tied fast till the crinoline looked like a beehive of red-tape documents and wads of cloth.

She slipped the hoops over her head and buckled the belt. A couple of petticoats. Surmounting the structure with a dimity frock and silk mantilla, she took her bag (in those days called reticule) in hand and passed down the stairs to the "Ladies' Entrance"—just round the corner from the main doors where the bandits were completing their terms of the surrender.

Her hoopskirt swayed with its burden. The unexpected weight of the luggage nearly overcame her. But with heart as strong as resourcefulness clever, she would be the last to let the load affect her light step and calm countenance.

Not far off she met a group of raiders; some clad in butternut; a few vain-gloriously rigged in red-top boots, coats with linings turned outside to gratify their taste for color, and red handkerchiefs tied about their swarthy necks.



"Terrible, but picturesque!" she said to herself.

Then she saw them demanding gold trinkets from other women, even searching the women's pockets; and this led her to go a trifle timorously. One ruffian did swagger towards her and call out that here they might find booty. His companions, possibly satiated by some good fortune, told him to come with them.

At last, breathless and quivering, Mrs. Tisdale reached the river, and in time to catch the ferry. On the other side she would find friends. There, too, her husband would join her on his return from Fort Leavenworth.

The boat finally made the north bank.

Why did she back away?—her stricken comrades asked when they pressed towards her as she stepped upon the sand. No word, merely waving her hand and seeking a clump of willows.

A minute after she came forth holding up to full view her freighted farthingale. And then the relaxation of a smile spread over every anxious countenance as she untied and handed Mr. Thompson his legal papers, adding a pair of stockings. Many had fled in scant clothing and her gifts served their needs.

Yellow smoke, plumed by the wind of a soft summer morning, now rolled skyward, and the

refugees stood straining eyes to lengthen their vision, guessing from whose house this cloud, or that cloud, might have risen. They had not long to wait before flames shot from the roof of the Eldridge House; and little longer till its brick walls alone remained to witness to the building's uses.

Human worth—what human courage could do to save men from murder and homes from burning—that day sent down many a legacy and sanctified the little city to all posterity.

But the retiring bushwhackers? Union soldiers traced them by their horses' footprints, and, reports said, next day came upon their rear. Yet lacking orders, they made no attack.

After a fortnight, in endeavor at Paola to organize retaliatory measures, General James H. Lane claimed that the ranking officers were rebel-sympathizers, and that ruffians would devastate the whole Kansas border:—"There is one remedy only, and that lies in the people's hands. The way to kill wolves is to hunt them in their dens. The way to exterminate snakes is to crush them in their nests. The way to punish Quantrell and his band is to make a burning hell of Missouri."

This appeal sent out several companies of cavalry; who, however, found no way to effect-

ive reprisal. In the end the guerrillas paid lightly for their raid on Laurel Town.

Unequal payment often evented in other intertribal wars—for instance, in the old encounters of Scotch highlander with Scotch lowlander; Irish clan with Irish clan; English faction with Welsh. Yet with this difference in result between mediaeval conditions and our own:—

While in earlier centuries Quantrell might have seized the stricken town, and gained a feudal title, say, “Earl of the Douglas Marshes”, or “Lord of Laurel Town”, in our democratic and more truth-telling days he was merely branded a brutal bushwhacker, and, rumor told, fearing some mortal might seek vengeance, in years following the war he concealed his name and his whereabouts.

### III

Colonization fires the fancy of nearly all kinds of people. First it seizes the strong, the adventurous, who must express their life in deeds, who are articulate through action rather than speech. Not infrequently high-spirited and imaginative, such men and women gave color and individuality to Laurel Town in its earlier days.

They had settled with intent of working out a free state, and to found institutions embodying truth and justice—bent, that is, on concreting such principles as Anglo-Saxons have endeavored after these last eight hundred years. They lived ardent, constructive lives.

Their circumstances were narrow. They understood the nobility of self-helpfulness, and perforce practised William Penn's advice, "Have little to do, and do it thyself". Their houses, a well-read Laurel Townsman once declared, called to mind Lord Hervey's quip about the villa an Earl of Burlington built; "Too small to live in, and too large to hang to a watch."

Even in years a little later, when we knew the burg, its people retained the venturesomeness of the colonizer and, bristling with "corners", refused to be dovetailed into community methods and community manners. They made no secret of their despising conventionalities as tyranny—in those days, one must not forget, the sane spirit of gratitude that evented from the Civil War warmed every heart; the old, basic American habit of mind prevailed, the benefactive, the benevolent; that outlook on life that gave this country laws and stable government, and invited other peoples to share the good of their labors;

the old American mental attitude, altruistic and helpful to the degree that when a stranger entered a yard and walked towards an owner sitting on his porch, he met the salutation: "Good morning, sir, what can I do for you?"\*

In those old Laurel Town days a considerable percentage of the people prospered on what has repeatedly kept colonists alive; "I have always fed on illusions", wrote one, awakening to fact at the end of a long life. So often did they mistake creatures of their mind for realities and insistently deceive themselves, that they did astonishing deeds.

Individualists of ripest harvest, "originals," "eccentrics," you see, thinking their own pungent thoughts so vividly that they dared to speak them; piquant, often polemic, sometimes seemingly irreverent, always forceful, effective, clean, and blessed with the cool, straight-to-the-

\*We had not yet passed through the immigrants' gate millions of foreigners, often boorish in breeding, saturated with anarchies and socialisms generated, like malignant, febrile plagues, in ineradicable slums of Eastern Europe. and travelling westward—we had not yet passed through the immigrants' gate spouters and adherents of spouters of vague, silly inaccurate isms; incapable of balanced reasoning; transferring their hostilities towards feudalisms of their old home to our country, and abusing us and institutions we afford them—inflanders whose only query seeming to be, "What can you do for me?" do not delay for verbalisms, but proceed by exploitation to answer their question themselves.

point independence of the New Englander; expressing themselves not in

"Taffata phrases, silken terms precise,"

but, rather, baldly speaking

"In russet yeas, and honest kersey noes".

Of that sort was Mrs. Plympton, centre of surpassing stories; a spare dame with prominent nose, thin, compressed lips, broad, reflective brow and blunt action.

"Mother, what would you like for your birthday?" asked a son of hers, the one she described as "more Christ-like" than her other children, "Blue silk for a dress or black?"

"Oh, get it black," returned the lady sturdily, "black does for funerals as well as weddings."

There you have it—stern, stiff, old Anglo-Saxon stock, yet so vision-eyed, tear-eyed, tender-hearted, too, in its depths, that it keeps itself from whimpering and blubbing only by pressing back emotion; a stock so averse to falsehood that it distrusts emotion as a fleeting thing and wipes expression of sentiment out of its daily life; a blood that has worked out world-compelling ideals and in accord with the law that great thoughts come from the heart.

A Vermont man whom the family had known before they trekked in white-sailed prairie-

schooner over western lands—a Vermont man sought a daughter of this dame in marriage. The bride followed the habit of women-kind the world over, and went back with her husband to his home. Not long to enjoy life, however. Upon her death, naturally and conventionally, her body was laid in the Green Mountain burying ground of her husband. There several years it rested.

At the end of such a time, for some reason later days do not disclose, Mrs. Plympton determined the reliques should be brought to Laurel Town for final burial.

Now, in such a settlement as Laurel Town, leastwise as Laurel Town was, each family knew the general lines of neighbors' lives. Mrs. Plympton had openly told she was going to ask Enoch for her daughter's remains. Afterwards she said he had agreed to her petition. Neighbors had eyes as well as ears. They knew the mortuary box arrived, and was carried to the mother's house.

Time passed into weeks. One afternoon a near-door dweller dropped in for half an hour's confabulation. The caller followed her alert and busy hostess to the part of the house where her duties that hour were lying, and at last spoke of Mrs. Plympton's probable satisfaction

in having the mortality of her daughter brought home.

"Will there be any service at the final interment at Laurel Town?"

"No," returned Mrs. Plympton. She stood at her ironing board, generations of refined thought illuminating her face, and her own innate dignity speaking from her person. "I had the coffin put down cellar.

"If I had been a man," she added reflectively, gazing with vision-suffused eyes into the impersonal spaces of the yard, "I should have been a doctor. I've always had such a longing to study the human skeleton! But I never had a chance before."

A ghoulish story, you exclaim. And playing back in the recesses of your mind is the wonder if Mrs. Plympton made her request of Enoch in order to satisfy her craving for the scientific analysis to which she was confessedly subjecting her daughter's poor bones. Not by measure of the average mind.

Mrs. Plympton's was not the average mind, however—rather a mind with native cravings choked back through long years of devotion to husband and bairns and now, at last, finding pathetic gratification. An afterthought, doubtless, her "study of the human skeleton," spring-



ing when sentiment had satisfied itself and mental equipoise supervened. In her concealing and suppressing an inborn gift—led to such conduct plainly enough by moral sense of duties she assumed when she married—the world may have lost a notable anatomist.

But listen to another tale—this *macabre*, too. Yet unadulterated truth brings a happier end.

A phrase-maker of Kansas, and the state has had many, once said that its climate was “always too ’nough or too none.” Amidst plenty of heat and no rain, Laurel Town had another ghostly happening.

One summer-day express offices under the Eldridge House received a long, narrow box; which was pushed to one side to await its consignee, Ephraim Quat.

An odd-looking box; and it did not strike the clerks of the office agreeably. The day after its arrival, glancing towards that part of the room where it lay, they began protesting one to another:

“Have you noticed? Positively offensive!”

“Strange name that—Ephraim Quat!”

“Quat! Quat! What Quat?”

“Never heard anything like it here.”

“Sounds as if it were made up.”

“I think it is fiction.”

"Wouldn't wonder if those six boards concealed some crime."

"Its very shape shows the box holds a coffin!"

Each hour its presence became more intolerable. By the day's closing the whole force were sickened, as well as ghost-haunted. And when the sun sank round and red, portending hot weather still on the morrow, it was not difficult to conclude the box must be laid in a kindly, concealing earth.

Next morning, just as the office-doors opened, a gentleman of the old soft-mannered type, white-haired, white-cravated, long-black-coated, a staunch Episcopalian, known as "Lord" Denman because of punctilious courtesy and other qualities the title "lord" supposedly connotes—Lord Denman chanced to come in errand about a parcel.

He listened with sympathy to the murmurs beginning afresh, and found it not hard to sense the grounds of the complaint. "Surely," he said to the protesting clerks, "the box is a thing intolerable."

To aid to their relief, he added, he would accompany the body to the cemetery, and, since his rector was out of town, help bury it with last rites of the church.

"That's the right thing for everybody," the

clerks declared, "and especially justice for the unhappy unclaimed."

Without further delay they commandeered an express wagon to take away the remains, and calling a hack for Lord Denman, and such pitiful and curious bystanders as offered to serve as pall-bearers, they drove to the burying ground.

There, in a peace unbroken save by the voice of birds and rustle of oak leaves, Lord Denman solemnly read the ritual for "The Burial of the Dead," and they sank the case in the resting place the sexton had prepared.

What relief every one felt! The natural buoyancy of the younger returned as they drove back to the office. The elder estimated their work as a humane deed for some unknown, possibly mistreated mortal. All agreed they had done as they would be done by, and had freed themselves from an offence that had reached the very face of heaven.

A day or two after this outpouring of compassion, a husky, well-overhauled, young farmer drove up, and sprang from his mud-stained spring-wagon.

"I'm expecting a box," he said as he entered the express-room. "Had it sent to Laurel Town for your office is nearer than any other to my place in Tonganoxie."

"What name?" asked a clerk.

"Ephraim Quat," answered Mr. Farmer.

Nervous glances from every clerk.

"Yes, we had such a box."

"Had such a box?"

"But we had to bury it."

"Bury it!" echoed Mr. Quat, "Why?"

"Well, if you'd come in the day after the box got here," called out one of the bolder of the office force, "your nose would have told you why."

The consignee could make nothing out of the history they gave him, and a few minutes later the express clerks again levied on a company-wagon, and taking with them the mystified Mr. Quat, drove to the cemetery. Work now was to dig up the box. And then the task of examining its contents!

They were willing to handle a digger's shovel, but at the duty of unfastening and lifting off the lid each man shied—all save Mr. Quat whose conscience made him fearless, whose zeal to get back to his work drove him on.

He talked lightly, the express boys felt, when he took a screw-driver from his pocket. "Any of you know a rain-maker?" he queried. "How I do hone for a regular, all-day drizzle," he continued as he worked at loosening the cover,

"the sort that comes soft and wets deep, not a pelter that pounds down and runs off and doesn't strike in more 'n an inch.

"Not a cloud as big as a tax commissioner's mercy in sight," he added, squinting at the horizon. "Well, it's ploughing this afternoon for me."

Finally, all fastenings out, he carefully raised the top board. Packed in waste and wrapped in newspapers lay the new "fixings" he had ordered for his farm machinery.

Joy mixed with shamefacedness filled the wagon which brought men and case back to Laurel Town.

"What could have been," the express boys asked themselves, "that made the air of the office so insufferable those days the box stood there?"

They were never able to tell. Perhaps they became sensitive about the matter. Leastwise, no word ever escaped to Lord Denman that they had resurrected the unhappy mortal over whom he, deeply moved, had conducted sacramental liturgies.

As for Ephraim Quat—he started home before noon declaring himself mighty glad to get those fittings, and he now hoped to plant his winter wheat within a fortnight.

## IV

"Nature," said a witty Kansan speaking of colonization appealing to others than the strong, "Nature is profuse with her Dirt, and sparing of her Deity."

Colonization does strike the fancy of a flying squadron of the Half-baked—people who, so far as mental grasp goes, pass through life a sort o' babe-needing-incubator-nursing; people unable to comprehend eternal verities; incapable of standards; with not a notion of the price the human race has paid for the modicum of truth it possesses. A citizen coming to my mind's eye as I write affords fair example; a squash-headed old boy, (his face suggested to you a gourd of the yellow variety) who bragged he had had no schooling since he was twelve; who would, for instance, go one evening to a "spiritualistic seance," and with the same approachment sit at home next night and read Emerson.

Yes, new settlements do also attract the Half-baked; folks one-sidedly intelligent, hardly ever articulate through the hand or any medium except the tongue, but articulate through the tongue to an astounding degree; people whose main aim in the realm of morals seems, in the

phrase of our Milesian friends, "to give a sausage and take a ham."

That sort has long accompanied colonists. Tales nearly, or quite, three thousand years old tell of Thersites in a Greek settlement.

The identical law held at Laurel Town. Half-bakeds were not lacking. Under this family name, however, stood various *genera* described in that day's idiom, more often spoken than written—a speech not elegant, but grounded in truth and winged by fancy—as "sap-heads," "un-mit-i-ga-ted ahsses," "pinky-dinkies," "bone-heads," "pin-heads," "natural-born-durn fools," and so on.

To trade on another's strength in achievement, to deplete another's vitality, and again to do deeds that made the stronger explode in a laughter darkening the eyelids with tears and as unquenchable as the immortals', seemed the role of Half-bakeds in the community drama. Commonly they acted their part well.

Not infrequently their sayings, or doings, were a coming to the surface of Anglo-Saxon "temperament;" or of that generous, laughter-loving, hey-nonny-nonny, gifted-with-words, devil-may-care blood—willingness to be led, lack of clarity and singleness of purpose that sometimes distinguishes Irish Celts. Long

life to them! May their number never grow less!

The tragi-comedy of newly married pair living at the Eldridge House serves an example.

A hotel is well enough for folks in health. In fact, for such a hotel is to be tolerated. But surely it is no place for an invalid.

And now the *force majeure* of the newly wedded pair, the lady, that is, fell ill and had need of home nursing. She was so sick, indeed, that she could not sit up to ride from the hostel in public hack or private carriage; and no such conveyance as an ambulance comforted Laurel Town in those days. Yet leave the hotel she must.

Her husband spent the night at his wits' end. Early in the morning he called in a maid of the house, and towards noon they had the lady ready for setting out—having clothed her in a pale-green silk visiting-frock, shoeing her feet with white satin slippers and covering her hands with white kid gloves. Then they laid her upon a lounge and rested from their labors.

Four stalwart negroes now filed into the room. Ranging themselves, one at each of its corners, they lifted the lounge and bore it down the broad general stairway.

Out in the street a July sun struck down in



the pitiless way the sun has when appearing in the guise of the Slayer. The lady must not suffer Apollo's darts. Therefore her husband, walking alongside, carried in his left hand the dame's parasol, which matched her green silk visiting-frock, and with its shade protected her face; while he kept her from fainting by fanning her with her white-satin gilt-spangled fan.

Thus the sextette, and the lounge, moved along the sidewalk of the main street of Laurel Town, and down the thoroughfare's busiest blocks. The hour was noon, when the "pantaloon folks" of environing farms had driven in for supplies and stood smoking and gossiping under awnings, or tying their horses at the curb. Women, too, were now marketing and shopping; and merchants setting forth their wares.

Naturally everybody held up his business to look. But the sextette went on, and finally reached the home of the lady's mother-in-law; where she was safely put to bed.

Yet the adventure had a charming ending. For the invalid got back her health and bloom, and the green silk frock had merrier, even if less attention-compelling excursions.

Many another laughter-laden tale went leaping from lip to lip. And yet not far behind lay picturesque times. Only five years before

the scout of a Union colonel used every day to promenade the streets in a black velvet suit. An embossed morocco belt held his coat snugly about his body, but the main end of the girdle was to carry a pair of ivory-mounted revolvers. Red sheepskin leggings covered his calves; and a military hat, set off with a flowing black plume topped his splendor.

Then there was the dame who went about in the innovating "Bloomers" of the day. One of the town-wits, sitting on the sidewalk, his armed chair tipped back against the wall of the Eld-ride House (loafers of a town are most often wits of a town; busy folks do not find leisure for antitheses)—one of Laurel Town's wits, slothing one afternoon as the Bloomers lady passed, exclaimed (possibly from the habit men have long had of criticising women's ways and deeds), "They ought to catch that woman, and cut off her legs to match her skirts." The force of this remark is plainer, possibly, if you turn back to pages seventy-six and seven foregoing, and read of the power of the petticoat in those days.

But you may be crying, "Monstrous, an intolerable deal of sack to one half-pennyworth of bread!" Still, after all, a whole pennyworth of truth lies in what garrulous, old Jean de Joinville told in his chronicles, some three hundred

years, by the bye, before Shakespeare wrote the famous advice of Polonius; "We ought to dress in such a way that the more observing of mankind may not think we clothe ourselves too finely, nor the younger too meanly."

An Anglo-Saxon child-city in Kansas is, after all, much like the rest of the world. To say its folks in those earlier years of Laurel Town were of like dye would, I repeat, not be true. Yet all bore the shade of the Kansan; a possibility a greater fact exemplifies:—In this country our Anglo-Saxon foreparents erected on Anglo-Saxon principles, attracting peoples from all round the globe—else why do they come here? to get advantages and opportunities they could not obtain in their old home—in this country, west and east even to the seas, neither are the people of the various states of like dye; and yet you see every child of them, whatever the shade of his state, stamped with the unmistakable color of the American.

Mysteries at times haunted Laurel Town. For instance, there was the English lady whose face bore the imprint of imbecility; a young woman of the fleshly, Rubens type, fastidiously dressed, guarded, never speaking to any one, every day taking a constitutional with two young men walking either side of her. Gossip

said the men were her husband and brother, and that the lady owned the fortune upon which the three lived. They suddenly appeared in Laurel Town; then after a time were gone.

Men and women at that day mysteries, to this day mysteries—lives which had not met conventional demands “back east,” or in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany and other countries; people who had, possibly, made a marriage distasteful to relatives, or had deviated from rule, maxim, or even the written law, such were at times shipped or themselves wandered to the Middle West. When they had the best of luck they got off the train at Laurel Town.

Provided they staid put and did not disturb the comfort of stronger factors in the old home, they lived at ease upon transmitted support. To all such incomers Laurel Town was undeniably a Utopia, if they were thankful-hearted, and a bit of a Cairo in Egypt, refuge of mysterious folks from sundry parts of the world, or a Botany Bay, also receptacle of nondescripts, if they longed for their own blood and its associations.

Then others besides those abounding in strength and love of adventure, and high-spirit-  
edness, and imaginativeness; and besides those suffering minor moral misadventures; other folk came who had failed elsewhere—a shoe-

merchant, a general store-keeper, clergymen of various denominations, each unfortunate wanting to bury past experiences and try to win life's guerdon again. And prosperous issue often took up abode with such workers—praise be to their persistence!

Again there occasionally landed in Laurel Town people so successful that they seemingly astonished themselves—people whom fate had lifted to a condition more prosperous than their ambition had ever vaulted to; and they had unconsciously come to attribute their own stunned state of the mind to their neighbors.

Such possibly was Colonel Perry. His colonel's title may have been a relic of militia training, or remains of the Civil War. Be that as it may, although from the old, refined American stock, he entered Laurel Town with a hoop-la, buying speedily one of its most spacious dwellings, driving about with spanking bays in clattering harnesses, setting up a bank, and declaring his wife had "nothing else to do but sit in her parlor and cut off coupons." As to himself I hesitate to report his exact words. Well, then, mind you, in a low voice and only for the reason you insist—he said—he was "fairly lousy with money." That comes of your insisting!

"Dramatic!" you exclaim, recovering from the shock. Yes. You know old New England blood is not given to attitudinizing. Large natures are simple, direct, straightforward, truthful, not addicted to tricks and sinuosities. Old New England blood is not apt to be dramatic in the cramping, three-wall stage of a theatre built by man; rather only in the vast theatre which has earth's mountains for its back-curtain, river-valleys for its wings, rolling prairies for its floor and the Almighty as scene-shifter; and in dramas of self-denial, self-reliance, religious consecration; works which would shame the Titans. In such theatres of God Anglo-Saxon blood has played, here in America, various of the greatest dramas of mankind.

That blood is commonly too sincere, too unconscious of any but its duties to be dramatic in posturings, in phrases. "He that is lavish in words," said our kinsman of the stock, Sir Walter Raleigh, "he that is lavish in words, is a niggard in deeds."

And yet Colonel Perry and his family came from a Connecticut town! How it happened, what urgency led to the exodus, no one could tell. The Colonel may have fallen heir, as we above intimated, to a sum which, to an unimaginative mind, had no end. Mortals sometimes

suffer that way. And when the experience comes, they not infrequently want to slough off the old home and find new fields for their activities.

In this instance in Laurel Town, as reports elsewhere, money made the mare go. Glitter of new things, and rattle, especially of harnesses of high-stepping steeds, attract. Folks less colorful, less temperamental, of the soft-grey weave of respectability and quiet manners, rushed to call upon the new arrivals.

The daughter Maggie, not openly disdainful of, but seemingly disregarding Laurel Town girls, imported a confidante from her old home. One evening the two were at a party Mrs. Means gave to her visiting sister.

A thunder storm had crashed down upon Laurel Town that afternoon. Rain came in sheets. Thunder rolled so continuously that it seemed one vast rumble, now in the zenith, now off on the horizon. And electricity had been so fluidly intense that it fairly balled in red light and shot about amid the greenery.

After the storm the air stood in drenched stillness, weary with excessive action. From the land vapors slowly rose and stood enveloping Mount Oread. Birds kept silent. Leaves hung in perpendicular from weight of the waters

which had washed them. Mosses stood out, their every feather-tip surfeited.

The evening of this superb spectacle, when supper was serving a thin, little voice shrilled, "Do bring me some pepper. Why! I never eat ice-cream without pepper." The speaker was Maggie.

"Pepper!" I exclaimed to myself. "Shades of Brillat-Savarin! If it were ginger; that might conserve taste."\*

Not long after the pepper-box service Miss Maggie married a suitor who had come for her all the way from the Connecticut valley. Her daddy's bank closed its doors. Gossip said he had fallen by the wiles of Income, a jade ever deceitful and flippant in intimacies; and in spite of the parasitic conditions which he declared he suffered at the time of his dramatic debut in Laurel Town, Income had given him the mitten.

Purse-pride rarely touched Laurel Townfolk. Their self-gratulation had its fountain in self-reliant honesty of purpose, action, speech, for the most part, and in like sturdy qualities of

\*Perhaps the order was more qualmish because in those days I was delighting in the twenty-four books of "The Iliad," even to the heroes' feasts. Then, too, that was years before I had seen much besides our old Anglo-American cookery; before I had seen foreign epicures, and Americans imitating foreigners, serve such mix-ups as roast chicken *en garniture* with onions and cauliflower.



ancestor and race. After all, it was only the newly rich who flaunted pride of purse and put their money into display.

## V

The social life of the little burg fell mainly along cleavages of church membership—a fact often true of older and larger cities. In Laurel Town it was sun-clear.

Now, just as the Puritan, his self-government, his demand for individual freedom, is the very core of our American nationality to-day, so his compelling spirituality has colored all religions in our midst.

At times you met the Puritans' stern sincerity, their fidelity to principle, their contempt for riches and prosperity when weighed against the moral law. Again you found the touching conviction, deep-seated in our hearts and causing rigid self-examination—again and again you saw the rudimentary moral conviction, pathetic in its reversion to early Hebrew ideas, that material prosperity walks hand in hand with moral goodness, an enduring witness of the approval of the Supreme Giver.

And you heard over and over the demand that

no power stand between the weak human and the Lasting Type—naturally you would in a state whose life, not far back, had been intense and dramatic.

“Don’t you,” hotly asked a clergyman of a staid and blameless resident of the little city, “Don’t you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?”

“Yes, I do,” returned the laic, rising to the same degree of heat. “But there are too damned many middlemen.

“I have sometimes feared,” the layman went on, “that Kansas might become what Andrew Lang defined India to be.”

“What!—what’s that?” asked the cleric turning swiftly and eying his companion.

“The secular home of driveling creeds and of religion in her sacerdotage,” calmly answered the citizen.

Religion’s practical expression—we do not speak of religion itself, communion between the soul and the Infinite and consequent peace and trust; but practical religion, our duty to give ourselves to human works in helpfulness, in truth and joy had open force those days in Laurel Town. All citizens knew that a man may hide himself in every other way, but he can not in his works—a momentous law which holds true of women, also.

The story of how the Episcopal ladies took in washing bears witness:—

Those workers of picturesque Trinity wanted to buy a new carpet for the main aisle; or perhaps they were after new bellows for the organ; something of the sort, at any rate.

“It happened years ago,” said the man who told the tale, “and I’ve been doing a lot of thinking ever since, till I’ve concluded roping in our wives and mothers is a sneaking way we have of fixing up our churches—we men in business meetings voting a thing shall be done and leaving the women to gather money to pay for it.

“In this town, and in others, too, I’ve seen the game played again and again. And did you ever find the women failing to rise to the occasion?—what with their oyster-suppers and chicken-dinners, their Saturday morning sales of pies and cakes, their rummage-auctions and every other means their clever heads and faithful hearts can plan and willing hands execute?

“I notice the Presbyterians, at least in Laurel Town, don’t so often resort to such subterfuges for church up-keep. There’s some incalculable thing in Presbyterian teachings, it seems to me, that makes good financiers—some indefinable quality acting on the mind and judgment. That’s true of the Unitarians’, also; and true of the

Jews'. Perhaps it is because their religion is not so emotional. They don't submerge themselves in a surging sea of sensations which have no deedy outlet. Their devotees are more masters of themselves, calmly abiding in a sort of practical religiosity—like a Jacob's, prayerful, yet subtle—not swaying in mysticism, choking for utterance of what can not be put into human words. Where Presbyteranism prevails the people are canny.

"But I'm losing my story. As I was saying, in those times the ladies of Trinity Church were taking in washing, I used to lay my way home to mid-day meal just to see the plucky workers hard at it.

"They met at Mrs. Green's because she had no end of soft cistern water, plenty of yard; plenty of curtain stretchers, too. Then she herself had such a faculty for putting things through! Out in her side-yard, or back behind the grape trellis, I'd see the women skirmishing with the tubs.

"There was Mrs. Arnold who took mathematical honors at Cornell; and washing was not included in her curriculum. Like as not she'd be standing before a tub sozzling and pounding with one of these suction punchers. A couple of others would be dashing the white things in

blue water, and another group chattering and laughing while they hooked the lace and thin stuff along stretcher-poles.

"And above would arch the Kansas sky, and below would roll Kansas blue grass, and in mid-air of elm-branches robins would carol and jays scream, and wrens chatter from porch crannies, and perhaps you would catch sight of a rose-breasted grosbeak hiding in the shade. Lord! I used to say to myself as I passed by, could there be a prettier sight! Or one more indicative of our race's active, bold, progressive self-respect! Or of our religion of helpfulness, holding together, protective defence of the group! Or of our state's motto, 'Work through trials and we shall reach the stars!'

"Of course the women won. They always do win. They washed all the curtains in town, I guess. I don't know whether they washed all the curtains of neighboring towns, or not. I rather think they did.

"And in the end they laughed right merrily at us men, who had lacked gumption to devise means to buy the carpet, or whatever it was, after we had voted the church must have it.

"Then, too, the women laughed at certain critics who, when they started out, laughed at them. But it was the gentle laughter of the

one who laughs best because he laughs righteously and last."

Other congregations, also, had their legends founded on folk characteristics. There was, for instance, the tale about Adoniram Kellner. You will probably agree with his workfellows that the most merciful, the final, judgment is that Adoniram meant better than he did.

To say Adoniram Kellner is to call before your eyes Mary Louise, daughter of a wholesome mother who enjoyed an apron string forty inches long; and an equally plethoric father, a coal merchant with a bank-account as plethoric as himself and his amiable consort.

A red-brick, broad-door dwelling, that also large in girth and smiling-eyed, in the midst of lawn, shrubs and graceful elms, formed the shell of their blessed home.

The joy and sunshine of that home was a daughter, coddled and petted all her short life. By gentle askings, by loving mildness, ready obedience and duty to parents, Mary Louise had gained whatever ends her little mind chanced to seek. The family-life was as the angels' in heaven.

In church work and the Sunday-school to which Mary Louise devoted her sweet efficiencies; was another laborer, a young man,

studying at the university—Adoniram Kellner himself, built after an ample, well-fleshed, Teutonic model, features indefinitely cut and small eyes looking out from a rufescent complexion and thatch of reddish hair.

Not a joy forever in looks, you say. But in devoutness, we answer, in what he termed devotion to the vineyard of the Lord he led every junior member. No one at the Sunday-school so always early and at hand; to see chairs were in line, singing books in place, temperature at sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit. No one else stayed so late. No other so apt at making Scripture quotations in just the right place, at just the telling second. Any one with half an eye could see he was bent on doing the right thing.

This mere gate-keeping in the vineyard, to use his phrase, at one time so lifted his spirit that he felt he had a call from On High. Yet, after completer examination of his heart in the privacy of his closet, he determined he could benefit a world waiting for energetic, efficient practitioners, by giving himself to banking six days in the week, supplemented by teachings of a zealous faith whenever opportunity afforded.

Therefore Adoniram dismissed thought of the ministry. Yet he frequented canvas tents into which evangelists, devoted to the awakening of

souls, gathered friends of summer evenings. At such meetings Adoniram's petitions excited outspoken admiration. "The sweet humility of them!" the ladies said. "We give thanks," he cried one evening, "for this new and beautiful tent in which we meet—ahem—for this piano to lead us in joyous song—ahem—for these chairs—ahem—for this sawdust; we give thanks for this sawdust!"

Adoniram had a rather striking voice; it sounded just as unbaked cake tastes; that is, to the aural palate it had the savors of raw, sweet dough to the tongue.

In his duty as general aide to the superintendent of the Sunday-school Adoniram gathered reports from teachers, and so it fell that he had often to go over to the corner where Mary Louise lisped stories of Noah's dove, and Moses in the bulrushes, and Elisha and his bears to a group of little girls. Out of her frills of lace, or furs, as weather might demand, Mary Louise's blue eyes would look up to Adoniram's face, and smiles would play about her innocent mouth as she told what the children of her class were learning and giving.

Now, if you have any fancy for reading the future without a crystal ball, and if you had seen the expression in Adoniram's eyes, and if



you had noticed his carriage toward those possessed of this world's goods—for a pinch of Uriah Heep as well as a dash of Pecksniff had gone to the making of Adoniram; moreover, if you took into consideration Mary Louise's probable, ultimate bank account, you could reason with moderate exactness that the young man would seek the lady's hand in marriage.

It all happened that away. Adoniram proposed the winter he was a college senior. Papa and Mama Huddleston considered his devoutness, his irreproachable conduct wherever they had seen him, his clear, logical thinking, his very evident helpfulness. With results that the month that brought Adoniram's winning of a bachelor's degree, gave also to Adoniram that happiest circle of a man's life—his wedding day.

One luscious June evening Mary Louise's Sunday-school associates gathered in the ample parlors of her home, full-lit and hung with roses, and then and there her pastor united her to the greatest hero within her horizon.

Long before the wedding came, in planning the journey to follow their espousal, Adoniram had completely given Mary Louise her will. "Just as you wish; whatever you like;" he had said; and so she determined they were to stay

at her home till they should take flight the morning following the marriage.

From this arrangement it fell that that night, after the wedding, Mary Louise stood with tooth-brush in hand and clad in little beruffled, belaced nightgown, when, after pacing half an hour in the shrubbery, Adoniram entered her room.

In he walked calmly enough; just as if he were used to that chamber, into which he had merely peeped before when it had served as ladies' cloak-room for church societies—in he walked and pulled a chair to the middle of the room and sat down.

"Come here, missy," he called to the smiling bride, signing with his right forefinger from her to himself, but without any other word or action, "Come here."

Mary Louise came.

"Now kneel down here at my knee," laying a hand over that articulation of his body, "and say your prayers. We'll begin as we expect to go on," he added.

A malleable little soul, dutiful, unacquainted with rebellion in all her twenty protected years, never necessarily assertive of self—what did Mary Louise do? Through all her life she had done what those she trusted told her to do. Naturally she did that now.

She knelt, and covering her face with her hands resting against her bridegroom's knee, she prayed aloud—Adoniram improving her expression as she went on.

Next morning the couple stood waiting on the porch for the family-carriage to take them to the train. June sunlight, song of turtle-dove and thrush, fragrance of clustering roses had put last night's humiliation from the tender heart of Mary Louise, and her sweet face told how her mind was turned towards the journey.

"Daughter darling," called her mother at the last moment, bustling forward with purse in hand, "when you are in New York you'll want to buy a few pretties;" and she handed Mary Louise a hundred dollar bill.

Adoniram's ears heard the mother's cooing voice. His eyes saw the gift.

That afternoon, when the train had nosed its way out of Kansas City and was leaping eastward over the sunset-dyed lands of Missouri, he said to the trusting lady at his side, "Hand that one hundred dollars to me, missy, I can take care of it."

The wife undid her *porte-monnaie* and gave her husband the bill.

Yet her spirits were not daunted. Such glorious days ahead! The great metropolis, its

churches, its music, its hotels, its tens of thousands of people every waking hour! May be Adoniram would take her to a theatre or two!

The train sped on. Tzu-tzu-tzu it sang. Rickety-rick, rickety-rick, rickety-rick through many hours. And finally, in the calm of an evening, leaped alongside the waters of the Hudson till its monster eyes sighted the metropolis.

Mary Louise now spoke of a hotel, the Fifth Avenue over on Twenty-third Street, where her mother told her they should put up. "Which way from the station did it lie?" she wondered.

"No," answered Adoniram, "we'll take a furnished room."

They walked about till they found one.

For their comfort, in case of railway accident, Mary Louise's mother had packed food in a lunch basket. After they had eaten what the lady's generous hands stowed away, Adoniram replenished the store at grocers' counters. They picniced in the midst of enticing eating-houses.

Still, their days were full of wonders and joys which an English poet, after his own nuptials, declared should belong to the "treacle-moon."

At last time came for winging their way homeward. Their journey ended in the dwelling

Adoniram had chosen not far from the bank in his home-town, Minnehaha.

Summer passed.

Autumn's chill lay over the land. One evening they had in a few friends, and the company sat about the dining-table cracking nuts and telling stories. Finally the talk drifted to what would make each "perfectly happy." One would start next week for a hunting trip in Australia. Another would buy an orange grove in Florida. A third would spend summers on his own yacht off the New England coast.

Adoniram was silent. At last, upon appeal, he fell to telling his supreme choice: Granting at the outset an income that would free him from need of counting costs—then, broad, spacious rooms; a fireplace in which crackled logs; a piano for improvising, if he chose; carefully chosen books lining the walls, with now and then a Raffael Morghen.

So spoke Adoniram.

"And me," added Mary Louise after a moment's pause, looking towards her husband with a wistful smile.

"No-o-o," answered Adoniram slowly, eyes narrowing as if balancing values, and voice taking a downward inflection, "Not necessarily you-u-u."

Winter pushed forward; and storms which held Adoniram at home even of daylight hours, and found him keeping on as he had started. Every night, after her day spent according to the meticulous direction of her spouse, Mary Louise knelt at his knee and said her prayer, which, before its flight to The Giver, Adoniram criticised and "bettered."

Her face had lost the soft, laughing sweetness of her girlhood. Her smile seemed a ghost of habit.

Still, no word of complaint escaped the little woman, or colored her letters to her old home. Save once, "I had no idea what life was, mama darling," her sad heart at last dared to say. "Why, I didn't know I had always been carried about like a kitten in a basket on your dear arm."

But springs do come in spite of the distortion of man, and when lilac bushes purpled at Minnehaha, and snow-ball trees whitened, Mary Louise's boy was born.

What a doting, delighted grandmother!—who had declared a new milch cow should welcome that blessed baby; a grandmother who had employed a dairyman to search the county and find the best.

A few hours after the birth of her child Mary

Louise lay half asleep, shutting out the light by snuggling towards the wall, when her husband came to her bedside and asked a question.

In her weakness the little woman only half-sensed his presence. But when he repeated, "Where did you put the cream from last night's milk?" seizing the tip of her nose between his right forefinger and thumb and turning her face towards himself, adding, "I'll teach you to answer me, missy," he thoroughly roused her.

Day by day after that, the nurse could get little cream for the invalid's use; it seemed as if someone took it off, or the new milch cow did not give normal milk. Moreover, wrote the nurse to the grandparents in Laurel Town—moreover, her patient suffered depression, had spells of silent weeping and showed no reaction to enjoyment.

"What is the mystery?" queried the dame of the ample apron-string; and she took the train for Minnehaha. In that little borough she vibrated between her daughter's bedside and the milk pans, dipping off the cream in precious spoonfuls, her mother-tenderness coaxing world-weary Mary Louise back to strength—till, at last, in the flood of early June beauty, just as Michigan creepers and Baltimore bells were again hanging out their clusters, she could bring

the poor ewe lamb, and her lambkin, to dwell in the broad-door, smiling-eyed home.

Suit for separation and divorce Mary Louise based on grounds of incompatibility of habits. The court listened to her testimony, granted her plea and gave her baby to her keeping.

Adoniram went from one success to another. Still, time had its effect on him, too. Years after he spoke of the need of straightening distorted conceptions, and of humanizing old-time practices, if we would meet present-day problems.

## VI.

"A notable occasion" the newspapers of Laurel Town called the Honorable Robert Borrow's birthday party.

History was making, Kansas struggling for rights and look toward stateship, when Mr. Borrow came from New Jersey. He served in the first Kansas senate and, "a man of high character and fine abilities," helped make Kansas a state; local papers said "a great state."

And now serene old age, an easing sense of triumph at having left the tragedies of action behind, of a peace forerunning the ultimate sleep, blessed him. This cool, clear evening in October men who had shared with him the good



and ill of fortune were assembling at his bidding, each enjoying, also, harvests of long-yearred intelligence and energy. For, in Laurel Town, what Pericles told his fellow citizens in Athens some twenty-three hundred and fifty years ago held true; "To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it."

They came through the open doorway, these elderly men, and put their names, adding also their ages, in a guest-book at hand: W. S. McCurdy, eighty-eight; Wm. Yates, eighty-two; Forest Savage, seventy-nine; C. L. Edwards, seventy-six; C. A. Hanscom, seventy-four; O. E. Learnard, seventy-two; Ely Moore, seventy-three; George Banks, sixty-nine; George Grosvenor, seventy-five; R. G. Elliott, seventy-seven; Frank H. Snow, sixty-five; a complete list would be long. Colonel Learnard had been member of the first Territorial Council. Five of the guests were in Laurel Town the first winter Free-State men spent in Kansas.

After the dinner, which had not forgotten the nectar best loved by Pomona, Douglas County cider—after the dinner, the company, retired to the spaciousness of the parlors, resting in easy chairs, called to your mind those grey-beards of one outstanding day that Homer

sings, "hoary elders, done with war but good at counselling in assembly, sitting rejoicing like grasshoppers on a tree down in the woods, and talking, but in a voice as slender as a lily."

They had no repining, no lament at growing old, those old-young men—a gracious pride, rather, that they stored so many golden deeds in memory. And their eagerness in reviving minutest details of old-time joys, and now veiled sorrows, was heart-moving to see. To their vision every picture of their stirring early years stood suffused with its own brilliant colors. Recollections of later days might be dimming. But that past of theirs!—robbed of every poignant pain they had felt in its moment, fear of defeat forgotten, hostilities overcome, rivalries of younger years given way to admiration for others' accomplishment; their past shown with refulgent glory. Involuntary impulse of Anglo-Saxons against display of sentiment alone kept them from what they might term "slopping over"; making the sentiment they voiced the sincerer.

"The old boys were young again," Laurel Town papers reported of the meeting. "Sharp wits undulled by age engaged in apt repartee. . . . One incident recalled another, one story another, and laughter and song filled the hours."

"Eastern people and papers jest about Kansas," cried one white-head, "they say we are erratic, impulsive, even that we are insane. I'd rather be insane in Kansas than sane where there isn't an idea afloat but money-getting and money-spending. I take notice there are some-things they don't say about Kansas. They don't say we haven't convictions. They don't say we don't act what we think. In those early days of Kansas we fought for human liberty, and to-day, and, I believe, for all days, we'll fight on the same line.

"My experience when I went down into Persimmon County is fair example of those booming old times. No state in the Union had had so phenomenal a growth. No wheat fields had yielded such harvests. No corn lands had ever run miles on miles together over a fat loam.

"Streams of wagons, caravan after caravan, came over the hills. Their folks would camp by a likely stream. Straightway a town was there. And before the nearby field of oats could turn its heads from green to yellow, the town would be a city.

"But its rival would spring up a few miles away. Then the politicians of the two settlements would battle to make their town the county seat.

"Soon the healthy young county-seat would want a railway. Not many days, and along would meander some promoter, like Isaac L. Monash. You've all heard of Isaac L. *I* knew him. Oh, he was not the only pebble on the beach in those times!

"Grip in hand Isaac stepped off the train, climbed into the bus for the Central House, and registered there. Then he called on the editor of the city's daily. Over in Wall Street Abraham and Emanuel Shekels were wanting to build a railroad. In his pocket Isaac had printed slips telling about Abraham, living in New York; and Emanuel, the younger, head of the London house, who had married an English wife and got himself a knighthood and was known as Sir Emanuel. Isaac L. had come west representing the Shekelses, to find out a way for a new railroad—a clean cut to Texas cattle-plains and the Rockies.

"Now, if the Shekelses and Isaac L. built that road it would be a road to brag about, an A. number one—not the road alone, but all its rolling stock, its total management from the first furrow for its grading to its daily cannon-ball express. It would cross the Neosho and the Verdigris. It would travel the limitless lengths of the Arkansas. It would pierce the mountains

of Colorado, bring the metal of the mines to our furnaces and farmers, and take back fruits of their labors to folks living on the whole east side of the Rockies.

"Did we people want that road? Isaac L. asked through the editor of the city's daily.

"Want the road? Folks were mad for it. They could hardly wait for Isaac L. to tell them what to do.

"So, just like the orientals in books we read when we were kids, Isaac L. clapped his hands, so to speak, and a gang of husky Irish lads came over the hills lugging chain and transit. And every farm-owner in the neighborhood went about bidding for a chance to entertain those road-makers.

"By the way, the law broke on me then, for the first time, that it is the Jew who employs the Irish, not the Irish who employ the Jew. One day I asked a soncie woman why all their clannish hanging together.

" 'Sor,' she returned, true to the Irish instinct for putting a question in answer, 'And haven't the pair of us the two oldest religions in the world? Is it asleep ye are?'

"Well, down there in Persimmon County, after the Irish boys had measured the land, people met to vote the bonds. How it happened

I never could see. Strangely enough the township voting the biggest aid in bonds was found to offer the only available route for the road! County donations and perpetual exemption from taxes followed. Land-owners claimed the privilege of themselves giving the right of way.

“Then they turned out with their teams, and ploughs, and scrapers, and hired men, and put bed-making through, carrying on the grade more than a mile a day.

“Ah, those were jubilee times! Farmers with timber cut down their noble old trees and turned beams for bridges from the sawmills. Free-Soilers whose life had been a total self-denial, who had fought border-ruffians and even taken a turn with John Brown; and after the war was over had got as fat as sculpins on hopes deferred—rugged old fellows who had conscientiously followed Socrates’ advice to a disciple to ‘borrow money of himself by diminishing his wants’—hearts-of-oak, blessed with Anglo-Saxon sense of courtesy, blessed with their inborn, inexpugnable conviction of the worth and dignity of even the humblest, said ‘Yes, sir,’ to Isaac L.; and when they went in-doors took off their hats to him. Think of it! Shades of our grandfathers and their Revolution!—Isaac L. and his whole blamed outfit not more than a generation

out of a meaching, Vilna ghetto, beggars ahorseback, and destitute of that idea of civil liberty which was the very breath of our old warriors' nostrils; liberty for which their blood had up-built this country.

"So far Isaac L. had not paid a dollar for his board at the Central House. He was all things to all men, and he had the best the town afforded. He even hobnobbed with the county-treasurer, and secured an advance in cash pending collection of taxes.

"Finally, one morning, the bonds came down, all printed at Topeka and signed by the proper officials. They were placed in an iron-bound safe which Ikey called a vault. Not a bond, according to conditions, should be surrendered to the railroad company, till the road was ready for the ties. Half the funds should then be advanced, and the rest the day the first train ran over the track.

"So our folks worked away at the grading, and got it done to the banks of the Wahoo. Then Isaac L. received half the issue of the bonds. He solemnly executed a formal receipt; and started east for the iron.

"He never came back. Springs came back, and crimson stars of the prairie-verbena studded the raw embankment. Falls came back and dry

September winds swayed sunflowers over the rotting oak sleepers.

"I used to feel kind o' sorry for the ilk of Isaac L. But after years of observation on this little pippin of ours, I conclude I am sorry for the other fellow. Tell the truth, I say, without prejudice and without fear.

"Our people were, and are imaginers, dreamers about an ideal, minds bent on the general end, selfish with the statebuilders' selfishness. Isaac L., on the other hand, had two almost unfailing characteristics of his blood; what Marx calls its commercialism—a shallow, puny practicality, and rapaciousness always for his nubbin, unsocialized self; 'O my ducats! O my daughter!' never O other peoples' ducats! O other peoples' daughters!"

Tales less stern came forward as the evening wore on.

"You speak of the growth of churches in Laurel Town within the last forty years," said one of the hoary boys, laughing. "Do you recall how a couple of students locked in a congregation? No! Never heard of it! Well!

"One Sunday night, early in a September, Ned Stetson and Jim Galway went strolling down Kentucky Street. The fall term of the university had not yet opened and buckled the



lads down to work. That's the same as saying a little grinding hadn't taken the devil out of their summer-plethora hides. They were too good-natured to live; in the mood of over-fed, under-exercised puppies, full of the pointless rage for action that, when four-footed, chews up rugs and gnaws off dictionary bindings.

"We're all of us puppies, I've been a-noticing these last seventy years; or more likely calves that God has tethered out in this orchard of the earth—not exactly orchard, either, for some of us are staked on bleak hillsides, and others in warm sunny valleys. But whatever our fortune in this world, each of us sometime in life is apt to wind himself in his rope and splash himself in a puddle.

"Those two boys came near doing it that evening. It was a little after nine when, in their meanderings, they reached an African church; the very moment the parson was giving out the last hymn. Doors stood wide open, for the weather was hot as Tophet.

"The two students, or calves, stopped on the sidewalk and peered in upon the congregated negroes. As they looked, they saw a large key in the outer side of the double-leaf doors; the only doors of the building, by the bye.

"With every soul in the church that moment

intent on the singing, no one saw those doors swing to; nor heard the lock click; nor the drawing out of the key and the laying it on the outer sill.

"Satan having prompted the cubs so far, his majesty then led them to cross the street and seat themselves in the shadow of a hedge to see what would happen.

"The hymn was long, the singers' enjoyment of it intense, and their velvet voices went through every line and verse. Then the congregation turned to go.

"One brother, amazed to find the doors shut, grabbed the knob and turned it. Without result.

"Another, thinking the first incompetent, impatiently seized the handle and shook the door till hinges and lintels rattled.

" 'Strange dat dooh shet dis hot night!'

"Other worshippers crowded about and tried their strength.

" 'Open dat dooh!' they yelled.

"But no answer came.

" 'Dat dooh is shuh done locked!'

"Other efforts to force the opening brought the same judgment.

" 'Gimme a chair, Elder Johnson,' cried one of the men after a few minutes of reflection,

'gimme a chair or two an I'll set em on de groun, an we can help de ladies outer de windows.'

"No other plan seemed feasible, and the brethren fell to working out this one. Two or three climbed on the sills and jumped to the grass beneath. Inside others were soon busy boosting to window ledges, and passing down on the outer wall the giggling, or squealing, but always 'indignant,' sisters.

"Meanwhile, across the street sat two young Satanites, peering through the branches of a hedge, holding their congested sides and rocking to and fro in soundless laughter.

"Before all the congregation emerged window-wise, however, one of the elders on outside duty had, by dint of striking matches and examining doorway, found the key, and the tag-end of the congregation passed out as usual."

"That Jim Galway you tell of," broke in a Laurel Town character, "isn't he the one who went over to London?"

"Somebody asked his nationality the other day, said he was a Hebrew," answered the well-read man. "He used, when a lad loitering through our streets, to remind me of what Dr. Johnson told about a man of his century; 'It was said by himself that he owed his nativity to

England, but by everybody else, that he was born in Ireland.' ”

“I'd like to know how Jim came to cut a swath in London literary fields—editor, and so on. I thought solidity a necessity over there.”

“Oh, Jim's able,” put in the well-read man.

“Everlasting highbrow! Can't you see a plain American's point? I thought a man, to hold a post wielding power in literary matters in London, had to have stability, veracity, moral responsibility, ethical sense—what you call *character*. We're more fluid over here and sloshabouts get more protracted hearing. But over there! Jim interpreting this country to conservative Englishmen! Geewhilikins! What pretence! He says he 'secured control' of a paper. That paper's name became a by-word, a synonym for hatred of America. No little ill-will sprang in England from its sordid misrepresentations of our people and our institutions.”

“Oh, yes,” returned the well-read man, an austere smile brightening his face, “but Jim's a child. Every Irishman of the exuberant sort is a child.”

“Treat him as you treat a child, then. Don't spoil the child by sparing the rod.”

“Unabated Irishmen suffer from lack of sense of the golden mean,” the well-read man went on.

"Many we get over here have been abated by various pressures. Jim wasn't. *Hybris* got hold of him early in life. The unabated knows no awe before the everlasting moralities; embodies the old Greek *hybris*, insolent assumption, lawless disregard of the rights of others."

"I don't know anything about your Greek, but I do know that wanting to appear cheek by jowl with riches and rank, chasing after the advertised, sneering at the retiring, with anarchists an anarchist, with socialists a socialist, hating order except to exploit it for his own furtherance, ever of the off-side; in short a natural-born incendiary, intoxicated with egotism—that's Jim. With microscope and scalpel he dissects the by-sayings and by-doings of gifted people; then, after dislocating their speech and action, sets himself before the reader as the 'smart Alec' of the occasion."

"Portrayers of men of extraordinary accomplishments," put in the well-read man, "seem sometimes set on coloring their picture, be the cost to truth what it may. Airs of superiority and patronage their writings at times assume are nauseating; parvenu, too."

"Oh, Jim's a whole heap of a rhetorical paddy," burst in the persistent old boy, "even if he does advertise himself like the dickens and do

other Hebraic stunts. Over in England, when he tried to stand for Parliament, he must have claimed entry to the tryout on the ground that he was an Englishman; voted as an Englishman. Who knows but someday he'll declare he is an American! That would be the acme of brass! Well, our government has spread wings of protection over refuse of Europe and got kicks in return for kindness before now.

"Why, the other day, down in Kansas City, I heard that little runt, Sol Einstein who made his pile in wheat-deals—I heard little Sol snarl, 'I have no respect for your country, or your flag. I didn't want to come here.' Damn such a parasite! Who cares for his 'respect'! Not our blood that made this country what it is, and works all the time to make it better. These United States suit us real Americans pretty well, I notice, in spite of the vilifications of all the psychically-twisted immigrants who seek our advantages and repay our generosity by mud-slinging—Sol Einsteins and Jim Galways."

"Oh, what does it signify anyway?" called one of the company crabbedly, knocking ashes off his cigar and cocking his eye at a chandelier, "If men do halloo your name, and crowd to listen to your speech! What does it all amount to?"

"Does it mean that you are more fitted to teach than another whom they don't crowd to, whom they don't applaud? No. Many are the ill-fitted fools I've seen run after here in Kansas, just because the fool advertised himself, blew his own horn, pushed on with subterfuges, while men better equipped were passed by and forgotten. Of all this humbug-loving world this Kansas of ours is greatest for chasing after blatant mouthers and persistent posers; after a hero not worth a hill of beans; some fellow who moles along always intent on his own advantage, till the nothing that has always been in him finally oozes out.

"But supposing you have an idea, and supposing you are a better word-carpenter than the next fellow, more competent to set forth our current interests, is it worth the effort? Isn't it better to chew the cud of contemplation with one's cows in cloisters of the country?

"The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing."

"Nerve-ache! You know how it pierces your body; down your spinal cord and to your very finger-tips! Staring, sleepless nights! Anxious days! And all for what? Our Kaw over there goes on carrying down its mud. Waters of the Great Salt Lake are just as heavy with sodium.

Why all this fuss and strutting? Telescopes show us suns without end; and microscopes declare that trees grow on our finger-nails.

“Why all this strutting, I say;

‘The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,

‘The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.’

“Better be like the robins. No dyspepsia for them; no palsy; no heart-disease. Life with them is joy; they do what they want to do, whether in clear æther above, or fertile fields and forests below.”

“Your naming robins,” smilingly broke in our naturalist, Professor Snow, “brings up a story I know, and since it is antidotal to the philosophy of this pessimist here,” nodding at the last speaker, “I’ll tell you of a robin, We’re talking to-night about Kansas folks, Laurel Town folks, and if robins aren’t folks, who is?

“Did you ever think what a democrat the Robin is? Have you noticed how he walks the earth? What solidity and security of gait! What serenity! What dignity from sense of membership in a community where the snob does not exist!—where the word *classes* is in minds and mouths only of those so unfortunate as to be underbred!—where no other social order than his own supervenes! Self-contentment gives him a breast projection that would put to blush



a chesty West Pointer gala-marching down Fifth Avenue.

"The Robin, too, has a big capacity for tending to his own business; seeing it successfully through, and not minding other people's. He grubs his living from Mother Earth. To be a good provider and look well after the ways of his household, he is up and off early in the morning. In this he is a true son of American soil, a thorough democrat.

"When twilight settles over the land you see him still hustling, for, after the habit of Americans, he likes a sustaining supper. His children grow like Kansas weeds, and his wife is as competent a mother and house-wife as her husband in his providing.

"As for his voice—a whole folk-song lies in his warble. If you think I'm overestimating call to mind how, in early springtime, your spirit rises when his first note starts upon your ear; how your heart lightens when his melody waves along a May air laden with the scent of apple-blossoms. Not only is it as if you heard songs your mother sang as you lay in your cradle; its echoes seem to trail further back and rouse subconscious, race memories.

"Then Robins have another American characteristic. Last spring, over by Green Hall, I saw

a lusty member of the tribe walking sedately on the grass. Suddenly eagerness struck him. His eye fastened on a bit of tissue paper about four by six inches. He ran to it, picked it in his beak, and rose to the overhanging tree.

"Toward the end of the long pliant bough on which he lighted was a small crotch, and in it he began packing the tissue. Gentle winds blew against him, and he had worked but a couple of minutes when a whirl of air caught the paper and bore it away.

"Only for a second, however. Down he darted, and, about ten feet below his building site, caught the floating piece, took it back, and again began packing in his foundation.

"Not long and another gust caught the sheet, that part he could not grasp formed a sail for the wind to seize, and a second time bore it still farther before he nipped it in his bill. Again he rose to the crotch and began hammering it down.

"A third time the wind played thief. A fourth—the bird trying to pack the paper, some mischievous harpy snatching it from under his beak and bearing it off.

"Class-time neared, and I had to go. I thought of Robert Bruce and his spider. With draughty winds I feared for Mr. Robin's house-raising.

"A few days after I went round to see what headway so good an American had made, and if by chance Mrs. Robin had had her infare.

"In a notch of the limb lay a nest; and from one side gleamed smutty tissue-paper. Mrs. Robin's cap glanced in the sunlight; and the dame herself seemed brooding and drowsing in peace.

"'Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing  
That can not be done, and you'll do it,'

I said to myself. Do as Mr. Robin did.

"We talk about an emblem of our country—and the Robin at our door! A thrush migrant; as our people are. Yet of supremely social instinct—like our people. Loving his own peculiar, self-built home—as our people do; but wanting that home by the abode and groupings of men."

"I know a story of another bird of supremely social instinct," called another of the company, "It concerns some of our town-folks, too."

"Tell it," invited the assembly.

"My story is about the little stone house below the university. Nowadays winds blow through that house's shattered windows. Yet there a lady once met a bird—a big, brilliant-plumed, gawky, Shanghai rooster; eager, impudent, earth-scratching, always searching

something to put in his maw, and totally devoid of reverence for people of distinction.

"The lady, a dignified spinster, almost if not quite six feet in height, broad-shouldered, doing all she did in what Miss Oliver has described as 'the grand manner'—a lady the very epitome of mid-Victorian propriety and formalism. In after times she held the chair of French in the university, an institution not founded on the day of her encounter with the Shanghai.

"Fifty years or so ago Dr. Charles Robinson lived in the little stone house. Perhaps he built it. Who knows?

"Anyhow, at that time, and, as you may easily discover, summer-time, the formal, mid-Victorian spinster, doing everything in her matchless way, this lady was the guest of her friend, Mrs. Robinson.

"The two dames lived each day under somewhat pioneering conditions—as who did not in Kansas in the eighteen fifties? Such a little stone house was a cramped affair to those used to the acreage and sweep of a New England dwelling. But there was all-out-doors—and who can deny the breadth of out-of-doors in Kansas? So the two New England ladies thought of out-of-doors when within-doors seemed a trifle narrow.

"To these two intimates, and the little stone house, Dr. Robinson brought home, one day for mid-day dinner, a friend passing through town. And quite forehandedly he brought a beefsteak. Those days distances to butchers were long, and meat not easy to come by. Then, why shouldn't the mayor of Laurel Town and coming governor of the democratic state of Kansas bring home his own steak, in his own right hand, if he wanted to?

"According to plan and division of household duties the two ladies had hit upon, dinner-getting that day was to fall to the tall, mid-Victorian dame. Then, of course, the cooking of the steak would be hers also.

"Now right here you get at the reason why I said I could tell a tale about a bird.

"The lady, beginning her task, laid the steak on the table by the open window; near the window-sill that comes almost on a level with the slooping ground, as you may easily see the next time you go by and peer into the dilapidated little stone house.

"Next the lady turned to get coals ready for the broiling. For a time she gave all her attention to the fire. Then, when she had it nicely coaled, she reached for the steak—just in time to see Mr. Shanghai on a dead run up the hill, hold-

ing his head far above its usual height in order to save himself from turning heels over head in making off with the meat.

“Parbleu! What would a lady, dignified, somewhat slow in movement, but blessed with the New England conscience—what would such a lady, in such an extremity, do? Dinner would be lost without the steak. Those were hungry men.

“The lady would give chase. Being from New England she would not call for help. She would rely on her own breathing and running ability. Precisely this Miss Elizabeth Leonard did.

“The fowl went up the hill. The lady after him. Then a vacillating mind led him down the hill. The lady followed. But before he had arrived quite at the bottom, he thought he would again ascend. The lady pursued his divagations.

“Till, finally, after a few more of the ups and downs of life, possibly feeling in his moral make-up that he was really the one at fault, Mr. Shanghai seemingly became discouraged. At any rate he dropped the steak.

“When the lady got back to the table, the window and the fire, there was still a bed of blazing coals, and, after sousing the meat in water, she spread it on a gridiron, and at last set it hot, juicy and redolent, before the hungry; flanking

it with ivory cobs obtruding milky kernels, potatoes taken that morning from between grey blankets of earth, and other goodies such as women in Kansas do set forth.

“‘And they did eat their meat, just as in older times when Luke, workfellow and physician of Paul, told of others leading a simple life, yet a life carrying a message to the world—they ‘did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.’

“But the story of her encounter with the rooster the lady did not relate till the dinner was over.”

“While Professor Snow was talking of his Simon-pure American,” broke in the smiling-faced insurance-man, “and our old Tory Squire here,” laying his hand on the arm of the pessimist, “telling of his clear æther, I could not help thinking of how I met Bud Hightower. But Bud didn’t live in Laurel Town, and so he’s probably taboo here to-night. Mighty little of Kansas in Bud. He lived just across the line in Missouri.”

“Before you strike in on Missouri,” faltered one of the elder of the guard, “let’s have a real Kansas song. Let’s have the ‘Corn Song;’ a good old sing for all corn-raising folks.”

“Say,” chortled the well-read man, his native

austerity melting into a laughing eye, "you remind me of a little story about Napoleon. 'They don't speak well of my *Arc de Triomphe*,' he complained one day. 'There are two persons I have heard praise it,' answered Antoine Daru, 'your majesty and its architect.'"

"Well, now, old top, busy as a bee and about as touchy! "You can n't say the 'Corn Song' hasn't Kansas color. You can n't say it doesn't bring a Kansas cornfield of a dewy June morning before your eyes. To your ears, too, the click of a young darkey's hoe as he sings among the whispering blades.

"You can n't say 'Corn Song' would n't sound good after those war songs we've been singing, heartening as their memories are. I'm not a doddering old fussbudget, and don't you forget it.

"Start the 'Corn Song,' James Horton; wont you? You're leader of this glee club. And you basses come on."



# Corn Song

*Andante sostenuto* *sofly*

I be singin' singin'

*still softer*

sing-in' in de rows of de corn I be hoe-in hoe-in

*softer ever*

hoe-in in de rows of de corn. De Out Worm come and he eat dat corn, De

*piu mosso e sempre cresc.*

Hoppergrass come and he gnaw dat corn, De Black Smut come and he spoil dat corn, So I be

*f* *trango.*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'Andante sostenuto' and the dynamic 'sofly'. The voice part enters with the lyrics 'I be singin' singin'' over a piano accompaniment of chords. The second system continues the melody with 'sing-in' in de rows of de corn I be hoe-in hoe-in', with the instruction 'still softer'. The third system features 'hoe-in in de rows of de corn. De Out Worm come and he eat dat corn, De' with the instruction 'softer ever'. The fourth system concludes with 'Hoppergrass come and he gnaw dat corn, De Black Smut come and he spoil dat corn, So I be' and ends with a forte 'f' dynamic and the instruction 'trango.'.

*always after*  
 hoe-in at five in de morn - in I've hoe-in hoe-in

*always dim*  
 hoe-in in de-rows of de corn. Mas-ter Sunshine smile he will grow dat corn, Mam

*softly gradually increasing*  
*animando*  
*compre cresc.*  
 Summer Rain pat-ter she will grow dat corn, Mis-ter Dog Star's wish-in he will

*f o rit*  
 ear dat corn, so I've hoe-in at five in de morn in I've

*after*  
 hoe-in hoe-in hoe-in in de rows of de corn. When

*gradually faster*  
 Ole Miss Moon in Sep-tem-ber is full, And I've got my mon-ey in my  
*animo*

*majestically and with emphasis*  
 rock-et for school, Mas-ter Jack Frost come with his sharp hard rule, And do  
*rit.*

*somewhat slower* *after* *after and after and*  
 her-nis will be gold of a morn-in, So I've hoe-in

*somewhat mournfully*  
 hoe-in hoe-in in de rows of de corn, I've

*sing-in morose* *sing-in sempre* *sing-in in de rows of de corn.*

"Now for Bud Hightower," chorused the company sinking back in relaxation after their singing, "We want Bud Hightower. Fetching name!"

"I've seen Missourians who shut car-windows when the train neared Kansas," quavered one of the cronies. "They said they 'didn't want any air from the damned Yankees to get in.' Was Bud that sort?"

The insurance-man smiled the query to silence, and began:—

"I met him on the road, in a park nature made and civilization had not yet reduced to utility and corn. Eye-measuring room for me to pass, and slowing his team, he called 'Howdy!'

"I had just pedaled up a hill and was not averse to stopping.

" 'Ain't you that there inshoorance-man what was down to Burning Bush t'morrer a week?'

"He sat on a board laid across his wagon-box. An old, white sombrero, turned up in front and sagging behind, formed a nimbus about his head. Blue hickory shirt and butternut-jean trousers covered his raw-boned body.

"Six days before I was in Burning Bush, I answered; I didn't know whether I was the insurance-man he meant.

“ ‘Wall, ain’t you ther feller what writ some life inshoorance fur Tom Linn thar at the bank?’

“ ‘Yes.

“ ‘Wall, stranger,’ he continued, putting his worn plough shoes on the upright board, leaning towards them and shutting his body like a jackknife, ‘I’ve bin er wanting ter see you-all ever sence that day. Ther fact is I was settin on er box, er whittlin and er dreamin just outside ther window from Tom’s desk, when you wuz er preachin ter him—an I want to say right hyer that yer done it powerful strong, too; an what you-all wuz er sayin hez set me ter think in right smart?’

“ ‘Now I live down hyer in Buck Crick er-bout four mile, an it’s this erway. We-uns has got er forty acre patch that ain’t so powerful bad, ceptin one corner what’s a bit rocky. Er piecin uv it out with twenty what we rent from Squire Haldeman, me and Sabiny manages ter git ernough corn bread and long sweetnin fer ther young ones.

“ ‘How many? yer say—

“ ‘Wall,’ in lower voice, ‘ther ain’t but two now. Ther dipthery took ther twin babies last winter’s a year ago, and ther oldest boy he got drowned in ther crick last summer’—and then

the blue faded out of the goodman's eyes and a misty whiteness overspread them.

“ ‘Yes, stranger, it were tolabable hard on ther woman but I reckon ther Lord knows best; least-wise that's what ther preacher wuz er tellin us.

“ ‘Yes, we've got er boy and gal left, and they're powerful good children, too. I'm pretty peart myself; but mam, she's been ailin and er punyin considerable, and it's been er worryin uv me heaps. Sence ther children were took she don't seem ter have no ambition, not anything that erway. She ain't complainin none; ain't doctorin none; jest kind er pinin. I lowed I'd send her back ter her mother's in Callaway soon's corn's laid by, ter see ef 'twont help her out.

“ ‘But that ain't altogether what's er worryin uv me. It's this:—With me er workin ther place, and what I kin tend besides, and er doin odd jobs when I kin git em, we ain't layin by much. An that ther boy uv ours is goin to be growed up soon, if we raise him, an I've lowed as how he'll have ter go ter school right smart, fur he's er goin ter have an edication, even ef his dad ain't got none.

“ ‘Now, stranger, suppose I should be tuk off! Why, after I heerd you-all er talkin ter Tom t'other day, I went to bed that night and got ter

think erabout this hyer dyin, and I couldn't sleep no more'n a rabbit. An ever sence it's been er worryin uv me, an I jest made up my mind I'd hunt you-uns up and see what you could do fer me.

" 'We're middlin poor, an I don't know ef we can pay out all ther money it'll take, but I jest 'lowed what er rich man needs bad, er poor man needs a powerful sight worse. When craps is good, and cattle and hogs is high, we do tolable well, specially when mam has luck with the butter and aigs and turkeys.

" 'What might be yer charges fur er thousand dollars inshoorance?

" 'Wall, I were thirty-nine month before last.

" 'Most forty dollars er year! That's a heap uv money. Why, ef I should take that much er year and buy calves, I'd soon have er thousand dollars—

" 'Ef I didn't die, and the calves didn't die, and ef I kep er doin uv it, yer say. Wall, yes, ther *air* chances, I reckon.

" 'What's that? Ef I live twenty years I'll git my money back anyhow, or won't have more to pay?

" 'Stranger, I'll tell yer what I want ter do. I want ter talk this hyer over with Sabin and

see what she says. And I'd like ter know whar I kin find yer ter-morrer.'

"I told him he'd better close the deal then and there.

"'No, stranger,' he said, 'I wont do er thing till I see mam. It wouldn't be right. She wouldn't spend all that money without askin uv me, and tain't right fur me ter do it unbeknownst ter her. She helps ter earn this hyer money, an I'll have to see her.'

"I answered I should be in Burning Bush to-morrow, and on my way back would stop at his house to learn their decision.

"As I rode away I could not help wondering why the Lord had seemingly put so many hearts in the wrong place. Here was one that should have worn ermine, and over it was nothing but a Missouri cotton shirt.

"Next day, with the sun still three hours high, I rounded the divide that looked into Sabiny's vale. Century-old oaks capped the hills and stood down to fields green with corn and yellow with ripening wheat. To the right, through the wood-pasture, nestled the couple's domicile. I got off my wheel and walked.

"But no sooner had I turned the corner of the hog-lot than out rushed a pack of hounds and coon dogs, reinforced by the two canines that had



flopped under Bud's wagon when it came to a standstill the day before.

"Eyes gleamed, and hair turned the wrong way, and it looked as if the brutes were to have a lunch at their own counter—when the door flew open and out came Madam, humble in her shame that a stranger should receive such a welcome at the house of a born Missourian.

"She wielded her broom vigorously, and talked as emphatically as she struck out. The curs smothered their growls and fled for refuge, one under an ash-barrel, another round the corner of the meat-house, a third peered over chicken-coops and others from behind the currant bushes.

"I was saved. To confront Sabiny! 'Holy smoke,' I thought, 'is this the she those honest eyes look upon with such affection?' Hair thin and lustreless, black and nervous beads of eyes, complexion in hue like a pumpkin, topping a lank, stoop-shouldered figure close to six feet in height. You would not call Sabina beautiful.

"I thanked the lady for her defense, adding that dogs seldom attacked me and I wondered why theirs did.

"'It's jest Bud's way o keepin them hounds,' she answered. 'He *will* hunt coons and foxes, and them hounds has to be kep up till they git

so uncivilized they purty nigh worries the life out uv me.'

"I enquired for the goodman.

" 'I reckon you'll find him down to the branch fixin o the water gap,' she answered, and asked as I walked away, 'Air you that inshoorance-man what Bud were a-tellin about?'

" 'Yes,' I said and braced myself for an onslaught.

" 'For goodness' sake! Now, why didn't you tell me? Wait till I git a cheer, and you set down here in the gallery while I call Bud.'

"In the yard stood a tall pole, topped by a bell swinging in an iron frame. From the lever arm of the frame hung a rope which she grasped and pulled till the bell rang.

"The log-house was typical—two separate rooms about ten feet apart set in a grove of honey-locusts. One roof covered both rooms and the passage between them; then, without change of pitch, reaching down to a row of posts, sheltered a porch or gallery. The shingles had been hand-riven and shaven, logs and posts of the house squared by a broad axe, and floors of rooms and gallery made of oak puncheons.

"A great iron kettle in which Sabina tried out lard at hog-killing time lay bottom-side up against the house-logs, in one corner of the

gallery. Not far off, on a peg, hung her side-saddle and riding skirt. Spinning-wheel and sewing-machine stood inside near a window.

“And everywhere pecked chickens, old chickens, young chickens of all degrees of familiarity. Sabiny with a swish of her broom drove the intruders away. Then bringing another chair she sat down beside me.

“ ‘Bud was a-tellin about that inshoorance of yours,’ she began, ‘but we ain’t come to no conclusions about it. You see, if Bud should die, and you-all should come yere and bring that money, I’d sort o feel as if I were takin it for Bud—as is I were a sellin him, in fact kind o like it wuz blood-money.’

“ ‘I’ve bin tryin to think it’s right,’ she continued, ‘but I declare to goodness it’s powerful hard to get it straight in my mind. I reckon as how the fault’s mine, though, for some of our best preachers of the Word are insurin, and I allow they’ve done got at the right of it.’

“We sat facing the west. A bunch of glossy green water-oaks cut off the sun’s rays. As Sabina spoke a catbird flew into the nearest tree and stood in questioning mien, cocking at us first one eye and then the other. In his bill he was carrying a wriggling fishworm for his offspring. I spoke of the bird to Sabina.

“‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘Bud sets a heap o store by them thrushes. Nestin with us five years now, seems like they wuz part o the family.’

“‘Here was my text. ‘Mrs. Hightower,’ I said, ‘that poor bird is doing all it can, is exercising all the intelligence its Creator gave it, when it feeds and guards its little ones till they can use their wings. If it dies, and its nestlings come to want, still it has done well because the Lord granted it no ability to extend protection longer than its life.

“‘But suppose this father-bird were endowed, together with all the rest of his kind, with intelligence enough to band with other father-catbirds and agree that if death befell him, the others would help care for his little ones till they could care for themselves. Then, if he persisted in exposing his young ones to cold, hunger and death, when he could help them merely by helping save others when occasion required, he would seem a neglectful, mean catbird, wouldn’t he?’

“‘I went on. Sabina’s eyes looked further and further beyond the water-oaks, grew bigger and bigger, more and more moist, until tears gathered and slowly worked down her sun-browned cheeks.

"Just at that moment Bud called out 'Howdy!'

" 'Wall, Mr. Inshoorance Man,' he continued, 'I jest 'lowed as how yer couldn't git time ter light hyer ter see us poor folks. But I'm glad yer come and hope yer's got Sabiny ter listen ter reason; fer she says she don't want no inshoorance on me.'

" 'May be I were wrong,' answered his wife slowly, 'and if Bud kin keep up the payments, it might be a good thing for the children.'

"This led to description of policies, in which Sabina evinced brisk interest.

"Hardly was I done when she asked, 'Why don't you-all write inshoorance for women-folks, too?'

"We do in favor of their children.

" 'Then I reckon we can settle this yere question mighty easy. Bud kin take out a policy, if I kin have one. For he shaint do more for the children than I do; and I kin pay for mine out o the chicken and aig money.'

"From some hiding-place between the logs Sabina produced coin for the premiums, and we closed the business at once.

"Only after I had partaken of her supper of 'smothered chicken,' had met the two children and promised to join Bud in a fox or coon hunt

when frosts next came, was I able to get away to Kansas City.”\*

The insurance-man ended his story.

Robert Borrow’s birthday party was drawing to its close. Still, each of the company must drink a couple of glasses of fruity punch, and all must join in singing “Auld Lang Syne” before they made final wishes of health and added years to their host.

At last, after putting on top-coats in the hall, and lighting fresh “face-warmers,” the guests set forth, still rallying one another.

Yet do not suppose they went in the limping gait commonly attributed to oldsters. Rather each one might have vied with Mr. A. P. Clark, who ran down the steps, and on the walk in front of the house—out in the full moonlight where everybody could see—cut a pigeon-wing merely to prove that, although eighty-four, he was the youngest of the party.

In such wise the Honorable Robert Borrow celebrated his four-score birthday. And if this slight record bears no conviction that the occasion was beautiful and human, it is because, after all, the story we love is vain and inadequate

\*Not in “the ordinary ‘Pike County’ dialect” to which Mark Twain bears witness in “Huckleberry Finn,” but in one of its Missouri varieties this story has been written and spelled, as Bud and Sabiny spoke, by N. J. S.

when compared to life itself—because, if one may reach so high, it is better to be Achilles, or high-helmeted Hector, than a commemorator, even such as Father Homer.

## VII

As years went on Laurel Town was drifting into the moorings of an academic, residence-town, where the old, democratic estimate of the person maintains itself and yet standards of good breeding prevail; where an easy humor thrives; where houses have an air of retirement, leisure, and women exchange cooking receipts and embroidery patterns, and the home life of the men is comfortable and constant, proving the law John Stuart Mill stated, "Whoever has a wife and children has given hostages to Mrs. Grundy."

In all this maturing clubs figured; for instances, the men's "Old and New." Meeting every fortnight for logomachy, its host of the evening chose a subject on which his thoughts and studies had turned, and presented his views; continuing lighter arguments upon his guests going in to his table for oysters. Before the end of the discussion each man commonly ac-

cepted the ground posited or gave reasons for dissent.

Tuesday afternoons, too, their alert minds bent on invigoration, women gathered under variously named unions—the first about fifty years ago as “Friends in Council,” a title borrowed from an English book. Decorous and as radical and vigorous as that time’s estimate\* permitted “ladies” to be, the club, one year for example, studied the history of painting in Europe.

A whetter of interest to house-circumscribed women! A sweetener and expander of the mind!

In their founder the “Friends” honored a spinster of best American traditions; and tall, high-shouldered, of dark hair, Juno brow and eyes, and a mouth filled with burnished teeth; a lady carefully habited also in prevailing fashions.†

\*Terribly unconventional it was for a woman to be vigorous in those days, when “The Little Health of Ladies” excited public discussion; and ridicule of strength and independence in women, such gibes as you find in pages of Thackeray and Tennyson and countless other writers, still bore their sting.

†Her broaches,

“lady-trifles . . .

Immement toys, things of such dignity

As we greet modern friends withal,”

ranged from carved gold to Florentine mosaic and Neapolitan coral. Sitting before her every morning, I counted a new one twenty-eight days, and then gave up numbering for fear I should repeat and so exaggerate.



Along with this massive physical impressiveness, a native intelligence increased through study of various tongues of Europe, and a quiet, decisive, formal, nay, icily conventional manner, which, like her figure, always seemed well-corseted.

One March day this ceremonious dame issued from Fraser Hall at the moment with myself, a slender student. During the morning she had been speaking French with classes reading Molière, or Racine. I had listened to stories by our Latin-tongued professor and Englished Tully.

A March day, we say, and in Kansas. Spanking gales enlivened the noon hour, and I accepted her invitation to join the lady. It was a professor's invitation; one, like royalty's, you can not easily refuse. Then, too, her talk was delightful; and at this juncture walking surer-footed in her lee.

As we went on our chat somehow, perhaps because of her founder's interest, fell about the "Friends in Council," that year studying the history of the French people. Next week, she said, they would be reading and talking about the war in La Vendée.

"You will probably read Swinburne's "Les Noyades," I ventured, the mention of Vendée bring Carrier to my mind.

"Don't know it," answered the lady. "What is it?"

"Oh, I mean the poem turning on an event when Carrier was torturing in Nantes."

"I never heard of it," returned the lady. "Is it long? If it isn't, won't you read it to us?"

So it came that next Tuesday afternoon I met with the wives and mothers. They received me with the measured, Anglo-American good-breeding of that time, and when they were done with their tasks the founder-president smiling toward me explained why a student was with them—because of a beautiful poem with which she would supplement their day's programme.

At once I began:

"In the wild fifth year of the change of things,  
When France was glorious and blood-red, fair  
With the dust of battle and death of kings,  
A queen among men, with helmeted hair.

Carrier came down to the Loire and slew,  
Till all the ways and the waves waxed red;  
Bound and drowned, slaying two by two,  
Maidens and young men, naked and wed."

The poem held me. I did not think of auditors till I came to its end. Saturated with its beauty, I looked up.

Did I see aright?—dismay, perhaps, on nearly every face!

Had I not read the poem well? I thought shivering. Had I wronged the work? an unusual subject treated with the adroitness of genius. Possibility of negation, that others would not enjoy it, had not crossed my mind.

An awful pause. Then one lady, who seemed to me more prunes-and-prisms than any I knew, remarked that it was an undesirable subject for a young lady to deal with—in fact, (this with a compression of lips and a side-glance) the poem was not decent.

Oh, what a sudden, striking humiliation! It was personal, then! The trouble was not with Swinburne's poem, but with me! These women evidently united in their estimate. No voice spoke for the poem; or for the reader of it.

Why had I merited such a rebuff? I questioned the blue-bound "*Laus Veneris*" in my hand. The poet believed in the poem; else he would not have published it. Swinburne would defend me; he knew why I had read his verses.

Pulling on of wraps, and getting together books and papers, sounded a relief. Then echoing good-byes. I went forth in a cold perspiration, marvelling at the mysterious deeds of Friends when in Council—and yet, after reacting from the shock of their condemnation, with an underlying feeling of triumph that I had

somewhat those dames did not, perhaps some power of contemplation and enjoyment of the art of letters.

Years after, only, did a glimmer come to me of what the mature women of that afternoon may have thought, and mentally endued me with thinking. Long after, only, did I see what possibly their horizon had not ascribed to me—that solely because of innocence of the world could I, elated with its music and historic picture, unconscious of its fleshliness, read the poem to their audience.

Nor did matters end there. They had illuminating corollaries. Later when I told this "Les Noyades" adventure to a literary man of Boston, upon his asking me how, when a student, in classes with men-students, reading Greek and Latin with men-instructors—how I managed when I came upon sentences saying what we moderns deem immodest. The literator said he was seeking my help to arguments he purposed to make for the admission of women to universities.

At that hour, I should for clarity add, a quota of men wrote and talked against the education of women, and women's study of Greek and Latin; saying, for instance, that passages in the old classics written in the naturalism of the

ancients, would instruct our American girls in what they should not know; would brush the bloom from the grape, harden tender minds, suggest there was sex in the world. To read that a poet kissed a maid might be permitted girls—staid Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen would allow that; but without loss of mental cleanliness, even, perhaps, of moral standards, young women could not know how many times Catullus sang he had kissed, or was going to kiss, Lesbia.

All expression as to sex that girls might, without contamination, assimilate, seemed, to these men's thinking, to lie in an Old Testament; if sex-knowledge defiles, a defiler outstripping the classics.\*

"What," said the literator in the interview he had sought, "What did you do when you, a student, came upon Greek and Latin passages not in accord with our view of modesty?"

"I saw them in my reading at home. In classroom I skipped the matter and made no reference to it."

\*Again, "What changes may one life see!" A study-enchanted Anglo-American girl shocking a group of married women by reading to them a Swinburne ballad, in the eighteen-seventies! An Anglo-American literary man analyzing the women's prejudices, in the eighteen-eighties, in his labor to overcome other prejudices! And to-day's girl!—her Thais plays and Thais operas; her clothing, devised mainly by an exotic, oriental people and reflecting the character of the parasitic odalisque.

"And the professor—didn't he?" pursued the doctor of letters in probing spirit.

"Never. Spontaneously, tacitly, such matters were passed by. You pass them by, everybody passes them by when they come up in readings in churches and other public places. Our students, men and women alike, merely treated sentences objectionable from our day's point of view as if they were not there."

"Didn't anything embarrassing ever happen?" persisted the literary man.

"Not while I was a student. When I had the chair of Greek a boy one day snickered on coming to such a passage. His laugh was not embarrassing, nauseating rather, and the young men of the class treated his amusement in a way that taught him better manners—you can always trust the clean instincts of the university boy. Passages, such, for instance, as the last of the third book of "The Iliad," students merely passed over. They saw what they were outside class-room."

"You say you were fond of Swinburne's poetry, even when you were seventeen," continued the litterateur (if one may report to the very limit of digression), "What about his out-speaking?"

"I loved Swinburne for his freshness, his

Greek quality, his marvellous music. You do not go to Swinburne for ideas—perhaps we may except impassioned democracy, praise of the glory of liberty. The sexuality of his poems and ballads an American girl does not think of, sees only as a faint shadow. His music, as the choruses in “Atalanta in Calydon,” his love of freedom, his revolt from inept, smoothly-polished phrases, his color, his tumbling waves of rhythm recalling the motion of the salt sea he sang—these kept his books in my hands for years.

“You can not deny American girls of Protestant training a native purity. For some reason they do not know, or do not understand the meretricious. They don’t interpret it when it is set before them. Of Protestant training, I say, because I have seen other girls more sophisticated.”

If what I told the literator enriched his argument I do not now recall. In those days the Boston mind, whether of Beacon Hill, Back Bay or Columbus Avenue, not yet fully conscious of its new status of loss of leadership, still maintaining a *de haut en bas* attitude toward the rest of the country, showed distrust of whatever generated outside, especially westward of, its circumference.

**EARLIER DAYS AT THE UNIVERSITY  
OF KANSAS**



### WINDS OF DELPHIC KANSAS

*Half-west, half-east; half-north, half-south;  
As in Grecian Delphi in days of old,  
The centre of the world as men then told;  
The winds blow ever, and through a god's mouth.*

*O the snow-footed, ice-armored winds of the prairie,  
Rushing out mightily  
From cosmic caves of the north,  
From glacial forces of earth and air,  
The winter winds of the prairie!  
They drive dark clouds from morn to morn;  
They shake the light o'er stubbles of corn;  
They whistle through woods of leaves all shorn,  
With never a hint of the spring to be born;  
The flesh-freezing winds of the prairie!*

*Half-north, half-south; half-east, half-west;  
The airs pour ever; the winds never rest;*

*O the sun-lifted, cotton-soft winds of the prairie,  
Cheering right merrily  
From tillage lands of the south,  
From warmth of breeding southern seas,  
The June-sweet winds of the prairie!  
They drive silver clouds all day to its close,  
And shake glowing light on young corn in rows;  
They rock the trees till the small birds drowse;  
They swirl the fragrance of wild-grape and rose;  
The seminal winds of the prairie!*

*Half-south, half-north; half-west, half-east;  
 A people intoxicate; and winds do not cease;*  
 O the free-state, Puritan-spirited winds of the prairie,  
     *Singing right heartily  
     That gods were but folk who were free,  
     That folk who are free are as gods;  
     The human-voiced winds of the prairie!*  
*They call Brown of bloody-blade from Osawatimie;  
 They smite swift the shackle—the slave is free;  
 To all the world they say in their humanity  
 "Come here and build a home loyal to me;"*  
     *The primal-souled winds of the prairie!*  
*Half-east, half-west; half-south, half-north;  
 All forces here meet, but the free alone art worth;*  
 O the self-reliant, right-seeking winds of the prairie,  
     *Blowing out lustily  
     From the race-brood of New England  
     In this western New England;  
     The altruistic, rainbow-future winds of the prairie!*  
*They strive ever after the ideal—Better! Better!  
 Till to-day they sing "Melior! Brook no fetter!  
 Of freedom the spirit seek ye; not the letter!  
 Melior! Melior! Better! Better!"*  
     *The cloud-dispelling, star-climbing winds of the prairie!*  
*So, prophetic in zeal, through hot winds and cold;  
     As in Grecian Delphi in days of old;  
     The centre of the world as men then told;  
 Half-west, half-east; half-north, half-south;  
 The Spirit speaks ever, and through a god's mouth.*

### TO THE UNIVERSITY

*As moon-drawn waters rise to heights  
From deep, far places in the sea;  
So shall thy people seek the Right  
Led by a steadfast strength in thee.*

*What Light thy folk shall have is thine;  
Their darkness—they did not aspire.  
To reach toward thy gleaming shrine,  
And seize they all-illuming fire.*

### "WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH"

*"Thou shalt not bear false witness", spoke the God  
of Israel on Horeb's barren height.*

*"Unto the truth bear witness", speaks the Voice  
Of every folk who strengthens in the Right:—  
To men of Athens in vast jury courts  
Judging their brother Greek by law and fact;  
To Romans in their order and reports  
Of the Twelve Tables and juridic act;  
To Paul, the evangel, who flamed his faith  
For Jew and Gentile round the Midland shore;  
To Mahomet, the Arab, him who saith  
"Thy justice knoweth God for evermore".*

*"Unto the truth bear witness", urge with awe  
All codes and ethics of our School of Law.*

### A SOWER TO THE SPIRIT

*To be razed, first fane of the state's pure learning!  
Thou, North College!  
After twenty thousand suns thy walls have watched rising  
beyond the river!*

*Now, by ice-freighted storms of winter thou hast withstood;  
by winds of March thou hast buffeted; by cloud-em-  
battled, thunder-bolted June rains thou hast braved:*

*Yea, more—  
By the unconquerable spirit of man!*

*By all civic loyalties since Demosthenes lifted the heart of  
the people of Athens;*

*By all sincerities and pieties since the singing of Homer  
and Virgil;*

*By Anglo-Saxon state-makers, from whose flaming ardor for  
freedom thou didst spring; by craftsmen who set thy  
brick on brick, puncheon over puncheon, that wisdom  
might house within their inchoate commonwealth;*

*Thou shalt not perish.*

*Whatever generations Kansas folk stand fast fixed in  
loyalty to their state-founders' ideals—loyalty to truth,  
to justice and exalting teachings;*

*Whatever generations Kansas folk abide sensible of the  
mightiest of gifts;*

*Thou shalt live on.*

*"He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life  
everlasting."*

*Through all generations, seeder of wisdom of the ages,  
thou shalt endure.*



## EARLIER DAYS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

### I.

Founders of our government and old-time prophets of our people, the Puritans are, we repeat, to-day the heart of the American nationality. Their instinct for state-building did away with the autocrat, and showed all peoples of the earth the road to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

They would purify life of mouthing professions; and stand only by truth. In their thinking truth could not be too hard provender for any mind. Therefore they would do away with symbols in every relation of the individual. Symbols to their earnestness intruded upon truth, distorted truth, at last displaced truth, and by substitutions weakened and disordered the people's intellect.

The Puritan was an unalienable democrat. He loved simple form in his government, simple statements in his religion, simple humanity in

his morals; even simple form and color in his dwelling and meeting house.

The Puritan was a utilitarian as well as an idealist.

Such also were Puritan offspring, the early people of Kansas, carrying onward Puritan traditions. They aimed to clean life of the lie that equitable work degrades, and of superstitions hostile to the fellowship of man. They were futurists, zealots, old-time Americans, the strong and even the weak striving for an idea, steeped in constructive optimism, laborers towards a utilitarian Utopia, seeking conditions which they knew had never existed anywhere, first of all *giving themselves*.

Our democratic, Puritan way, you see, whose course here in America started when the English devouts set foot on this continent. Through their blood and their transmitted spirit, it has gone on to this hour.

So our human kind goes forward, driving on, blundering on through lives of generations, eying a light afar off, aiming at the right thing, sometimes doing it, often failing, but never putting aside effort to reach its shining goal.

Now, in this paragraph only, let us look back to centuries before our Puritans, when schools were for the education of churchmen, when

priests and brotherhoods were the reservoirs of learning; preserves, transcribers, commentators, employing their time and strength to keep and exalt rules and authorities upon which their ease, their honor and life itself rested. What their schools taught served theologians and the ends of theology. The people at large were sunk in gross ignorance; their natural growth dwarfed, their minds unawakened, stupefied by unremitting toil to gain their scantiest physical sustenance. Events brought about emancipation of intellectual life in the Restoration of Learning. In the next century sprang forward emancipation of religious life in the Great Reformation. Then, in the seventeenth century, followed emancipation of political life in the Puritan Revolution.

In their heirship of these three great movements our Puritans embodied a regnant principle of Protestantism whose preciousness has been put by many, but by none better than Shakespeare in this sentence;

"Ignorance is the curse of God;  
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven".

Puritans, that is, developed a passion for founding schools and teaching children. "After God had carried us safe to New England, and we



had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for, and looked after, was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity."

With the result that those Puritans who came to American soil made our race's early history, in good degree, the effort of an earnest people to set in sun-bright clarity education's benefactions.

These old Puritan ideas the early Kansans inherited.\* Obedient to their mighty estate, in the evolution of order in their commonwealth, they proceeded to build toward their educational ideal.

The ideal took on the form of a pyramid, you might say—yet a pyramid greater than any people before their times had ever reared. Centuries ago, near three-score, old Khufu—to cite the most renowned of all who built pyramids heretofore—old Cheops set the vast pyramid

\*So early as October, 1854 (shortly after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill) the first governor of Kansas territory, Andrew H. Reeder, said in a speech at Lawrence City (reported in the *Herald of Freedom*, No. 3, Vol. 1); "It is important to a state that the people should be educated; for when they are thoroughly educated they understand their own rights, and know how to defend the rights of others."

which bears his name upon Sahara's sands, covering upwards of thirteen acres. With the labor of slaves he vaingloriously made a dead-house to preserve the embalmed flesh of an absolute sovereign.

But the early individualists of Kansas built their pyramid, greater than any pyramid ever raised save in other states building with like ideals—the early individualists of Kansas built their pyramid as a living-house for making best possible, forward-looking citizens of a democracy, any one loyal citizen being worth many absolute sovereigns; a living-house, not upon sands of a desert, but rock-founded in a rich soil materially and spiritually housing and furthering the soul of its people.

This greatest of pyramids, the educational, the Kansans reared over the whole vast acreage of their state—its base the common school for every child; and, superimposed on the common, high schools for all who would seek them. And above these secondary schools university teachings of what is for all ages true—teachings affording Everybody content of that which the spirit of man has wrung from his own soul, and from the nature about him, through the aeons of our human evolution. A pyramid, you see, built on preserving and glorifying everlastingly

not one dead prince, but a whole, united, vital people.

This educational pyramid, stretching the length of Kansas, four hundred miles, and its breadth, two hundred miles, has then for its apex a university, a House of Light, testifying that its supporters apply ideas to life with overwhelming force.

For any democracy must be loyal to the truth that instruction of the people in the imperishable ideals of humanity forwards that people, and raises the plane of their knowledge and of their ethics.

And the Kansans set it, this Light-House of their educational ideal, upon a wind-driven hill; with result that all comers to Laurel Town, and all passers-by Laurel Town, may see its outer beauty and behold what a beacon the people have, what a treasure and guide to safe-journeys, if in the future, they shall welter through any void of mystery and dread.

In another way, also, this university of the Kansans should embody their educational ideals. With genuine democratic spirit those lonely, passionate, experimental founders would have education broaden and deepen all human life. Not men's alone. Women, as well, should be students. A golden leaf from Aristotle's

"Politics" they carried in their hearts—a principle, in fact, which affected nearly all their foundation: "Women and children must be trained by education with an eye to the state, if the virtues of either make any difference in the virtue of the state. And they must make a difference; for the children grow up to be citizens, and half the free persons in a state are women."

The sentiment that would abolish women-competitors in what men esteem their fields of labor has often worked against women in democracies, overbalanced men's judgment and led to malignant injustices. Men have been little disposed to raise women from ages-long position as handmaid in their works and ambitions to a rivalry in the same ambitions and works. As a rule aristocracies have been more generous to women than democracies.

But in Kansas, when a state-making ideal, in angry revolt against social iniquities, would take the people in its arms and lift them heavenward, deepen consciousness of their life and vocation by competent knowledge of the mysteries of the great nature about them, by ideas of what other dwellers on earth have done; in Kansas, when state-making ideals dominated, their organs of expression determined that women, with men, should profit by whatever education the

state afforded. "Where there is no vision," said an old maxim-maker, "the people perish." Contrariwise, where there is vision, the people thrive. So came the University of Kansas—result of the leaguings of a long-visioned people.

Strange that through its history short-visioned folks should assail the institution, its every evolving interest, its every expanding ambition. Fortunately for the state the myopic have numbered fewer than the far-sighted. At times in the world's history long-visioned people have counted less than the short. Ten righteous men could once save a city; and old Abram prayed. Yet the city perished.

## II

It was now the eighteen-sixties; in Kansas; and Civil War ended. Hardly had the people eased their hands of the rifle, however, and strengthened their gaunt forms from the winning, when booms began assailing their ears—money-mad bondsellers exciting the futurists to town-building and county-forming, to railway construction, to cattle-raising, to irrigation-ditch-digging. In other words, astute financiers in eastern counting houses played with the virtuous weaknesses of idealistic pioneer-agricul-

turists—sanguine temperaments always “going to be” prosperous; and so fired their imagination that at times they called special poll-days for voting their little moneys to the conscienceless counter-desks; and gave not only their own strength and time, but their men and horses, their machinery to fill the counter-desks’ pockets—something of the old-time saint, something of the old-time martyr; quite as much Tartarin of Tarascon as Don Quixote, you see.

But disappointments came and reactions set in. Discontent with the farmers’ social condition, demand for a voice in affairs commensurate with their economic value, dissatisfaction with charges of middlemen and with discrimination of railways, protest against lessening prices of the soil-tillers product, at last led farmers to co-operate, and to their forming a party which entered practical politics under the name of Grangers.

The Granger movement was a protest, we say. “The old feudal system,” farmers reasoned, “sprang up when the chief form of wealth was land. On one side was the rich man who, to get an income from his tenure, rented it for service. On the other was the man who had his service to sell; which he traded for the use of the ground.

“In this new feudal system burgeoning about us, where the chief form of wealth is commerce, the man rich in all the vast material of commerce is the baron. He gets an income by renting berths to the poor man with labor to barter, pinches us land-workers as his legitimate spoil and cheapens our product.

“Just as in old centuries the baron, or rich man, gobbled small lands and demanded service from the freeholder, so now ‘Big Interests,’ railways and other corporations, swallow little businesses, crowd to the wall few-acre, independent farmers and small traders, starve them into selling out, and force them to gain support in dependencies and offices of their employ. To-day in the huge armies of commerce-clerks and meagre farmings, we have incipient serf conditions.

“In the old time the strong seized the rights of government. The court that enforced the law was their court.”

By such reasonings the Granger movement strengthened, and became an outstanding protest of the American pioneer against developments and complexities he could not meet; his organized declaration against gradual enchaining—in fact, the first united agriculturists’ voice in the now world-wide cry for the eman-

cipation of the workers' life; an on-coming emancipation whose final fruits must be men and women so large-souled that money to them means what the word itself, in an early use, signified, *the adviser*; people so honorable in word and deed that their simplicity makes decked-out show and pomp ridiculous.

Spread of Grangers' tenets accomplished great good. Kansas stump-speakers from Granger cohorts, however, during one of the hottest campaigns of the eighteen-seventies, misrepresented the university. They threatened to cut off legislative appropriations which supported it, and cried out that the professors were a lot of "old barnacles;" that they would dismember the institution altogether if they should win at the polls. Twilight of election day showed Grangers sweeping the state.

As we look back now, the threats of these campaigners become mere perfervid ignorance, red-rag oratory. The university was not dilacerated. It lived on, and to-day bears proof of health in its survival after certain ideas and men inducted into its life-current—its vigor reminding you of a super-healthy human body immune from stated maladies after fever-giving serums have been injected in its blood.

This night of the Granger election in the early



seventies, however, when Laurel Town had received returns and closed her polls, a group of young men-students, eagerly watching incoming figures, saw for the future only a ruthless carrying out of Granger threats and the crushing of a university they loved.

Before a single adverse act of the party arriving at power, their loyalty was forecasting opposition, plotting revenge, giving itself as inexperience will, as youth will, to sudden, blind, retaliatory feeling, to the raging reprisal of the herd.

An impulse struck them to arm with staves and raid the country-side. They had no clear thought, no definite plan of action. Grangers were farmers; farmers Grangers; therefore all soil-tillers, no matter how unoffending, however non-Granger, object of their spirit of vengeance.

Precisely such instincts as led our forebears to forays famed in song and story gripped these boys. Back in the centuries, and yet not so very far back either, when our ancestors lived in England and Scotland and Ireland and other parts of Europe, neighbors in armed bands pillaged one another to gain some possession, or for sport. In early Ireland, when all land was common and property lay mainly in herds, men took their every-day exercise in cattle-spoiling.

"The Cattle-raid of Cooley" incited the greatest of Irish epics. "Fleet foot in the foray" stood on every march between old Wales and England, Scotland and England, and even on boundary lands of France and Italy. Our race ballads, such as "The Hunting of the Cheviot," make this clear. So also our chronicles. Froissart's tale of the battle of Otterbourn pictures the Scots "doing many sore displeasures," "burning and exiling the country" when they penetrated England.

That night of the Grangers' victory in Kansas, we say, these university students were possessed of impulses inherited by our north-of-Europe races. Who knows but the very blood of Hotspur, or of James Douglas, went coursing through veins of more than one of the boys? Not a soul of them, probably, who had not come down from fighters at Chevy Chase, or like contests. Then, besides this, there were the group-impulses of forefathers in town-against-gown, gown-against-town life.

### III.

A north-west wind had cleared the sky, and a fulling moon filled the night with such splendor that the earth whitened where its light struck,

and bold, black shadows lay back of all that opposed its pale glory. The dry, packed ground, frost-hardened, rang under footsteps as if it were iron.

An exhilarating night! With its stimulus of cold, brilliant, electric air, undeniably a night to develop a temper for walking. To study such a night! To sleep such a night! Not when Grangers had swept the state.

"What's the use, anyway! A fortnight and there won't be a university to go to."

"Then why worry about that assignment of Tacitus!"

"And those problems in calculus!"

"That *Bestimmung* of Fichte!"

"Have at 'em! Have at 'em," the band roared, "Grangers! Grangers!"

Noise is necessary in a sally—unless secrecy and victory are pledged. Not merely one hot, flashing shout—that does not let off electric currents. Rhythm leads the blood to even beating, unifies feeling and chokes back individual conscience pressing to the fore. Sing they must. "Marching through Georgia" they began; and soon "Maryland, my Maryland."

A buoyant air carried their voices far. Wives who had gathered husband and children round the family reading lamp—a favorite way of

spending the evening in those days—listened wondering, and sent “honey” to the door to see what the passing singers meant. “Only university-boys, mother dear,” the scout reported.

These student-forayers, we say, bore through the town northwestwardly, till street and house no longer hemmed their way and they had traversed the big ravine.

A country road, picketed on either side by osage-orange hedges opened before their eyes. Through such brambles forayers might not enter Grangers’ acres.

Forward then!

Forward to the little ravine; then across it, and so on till at last they reached the north woods spoken of on page eight foregoing—those north woods from whose depths the music of whip-poor-wills wailed in moon-lit, summer nights.

Fate no man can explicate. What lot now swerved these self-appointed requiters off the main road and down a by-path not one of them could ever afterwards tell. From their spirit reason, good-sense, had fled. Youth’s fun-making and youth’s rage for mere action, even if inept, had the lead.

William Crooks, an American of the old bound-to-win-out, “over-the-mountains” stock,

had united his fortune with a buxom wife back in his native state; and after tacking and veering their prairie-schooner to Kansas, they had settled in a little house near the north woods, with such belongings as delight thrifty soil-dwellers gathered about them.

This moonlit night their cottage stood calm and silent. Inside Mr. and Mrs. Crooks were sleeping the sleep of tired muscles and peace of mind; and on their perches in an outhouse hard by sat the lady's birds, snugly somnolent, folding wings over twenty to thirty pounds apiece avoirdupois—fat bronze turkeys, and at this November election-night ready for Thanksgiving and Christmas markets.

A roost so remote from the main road had little need of padlock. Any one might take the pin from the post and swing back the door.

"What's this!"

"A roost!"

"A roost?"

A forayer's hand draws the pin and opens the door.

"Do I see chickens?"—peering inside.

"Do I?"

All try to thrust their heads in.

"No, I do not see chickens."

"What do I see?"

"Turkeys!"

"T-u-r-k-s."

"A brace of the birds! What d'ye say?"

"Three would make it surer!"

"A feast!"

"Draw their blood and pledge everlasting war on Grangers."

"Careful! Gemini! Grab their throats so they won't squawk."

The forayers rush up the hill, toward the main-traveled road, hugging the fowls so tight that not a sound could escape their beaks.

"Let's find a place to roast 'em."

"Not round here. What'd we cook 'em in?"

A moment's pause.

"Confound it! What shall we do with the blamed things now we've got 'em? Can n't take 'em to a landlady—she'd say why this?—and why that?—and go off on her ear."

"Got to cook 'em ourselves."

"Cook 'em ourselves! You know a lot about it!"

"Huh! I helped two summers in our Colorado camp."

"Well, then, where?"

Chorus: "Yes, oh-h-h where?"

"I've got it! Donegal, that fellow with grades in zoology—janitor—batches in basement of old

North College; probably hasn't had a bite of anything but corn pone and bacon since September."

"Will he keep 'em till to-morrow night, do you think?"

"Gee! By that time we can get bread and things; cook 'em by his stove!"

"A grasshopper sat on a sweet potato vine",

struck up the van entering the main road.

"A sweet potato vine, a sweet potato vine!"

echoed the rear line.

"A turkey gobbler waltzed up behind,  
And yanked him off that sweet potato vine",

yelled every cub-forayer.

But singing was too poor. They must dramatize the song. One forayer must be a sweet potato vine. Another the grasshopper. Still another must waltz about and, with great show of a pecking turkey, "yank" the grasshopper off the vine.

In such mental and moral vacuity they trooped back to Laurel Town, the marvellous moonlight casting their figures on the broad highway in a blackness as dark as their deeds.

Town gained, they made for North College, and by dint of beating on windows roused the

student-janitor to half-awake, and left their booty in his hands.

Next night witnessed the sacrifice of the birds. And barbarians never used more binding rites, each of the company daubing forehead and hand with the victims' blood, pledging and vowing, as our earlier men used, to gird his body with thorns, to go about with ash-strewn, shaven head, and undertake other penance, if he failed in retaliatory vengeance upon all Grangers dismembering his faculty and withholding legislative support of his university.

Oaths sealed and ablutions made, the feast followed—turkeys, and by their side such dishes as to boys' zestful palates enhanced the meat's lusciousness.

The morning of the evening of this merry-making Mr. Crooks rose early. Mr. Crooks rose early every morning, but now unwonted noises got him out of bed. His wife's turkeys were loose, scratching close by the house.

Every evening, after enjoying the well-balanced supper Mrs. Crooks prepared, Mr. Crooks fastened the roost-door with its pin. He knew he shut the door last night. Yet here the birds were outside their pen.

He surveyed the industrious fowls through the window. "Annabella," he called, buttoning



up his waistcoat, "did you say you now have fourteen turkeys?"

"No, seventeen," answered his wife from her milk-skimming in the pantry.

"They're all out, and I can n't count but fourteen," returned Mr. Crooks.

Mrs. Crooks hastened to his side, and even after another numbering, and after a searching of the roost and looking in the woods for wanderers, fourteen were all they could muster.

"Niggers!" ejaculated Mr. Crooks.

"Niggers!" echoed Mrs. Crooks.

"I'll get a dog," threatened Mr. Crooks, "If it were the first time those brickyard darkies had swiped a meal from us, I might stand it. Them shoats they stole last July made a mighty fine dinner for their Fourth. A dog 'll settle their hash."

"That's the way it always is with everything I have!" weakly wailed Mrs. Crooks, wiping her eyes on a corner of her Kentucky homespun apron, "I never can have things like other people!"

A few days after these happenings, Mr. Crooks came to see Judge Stephens about the rent of more acres. Business done, he sat back in his chair, crossed his legs and told of his wife's loss. So it went. A farmer was the most

bedeviled fellow on earth. Everybody tried to skin him, from brokers off in Wall Street to brickyard darkies here in Laurel Town.

Months and months, from the day they hatched, Mrs. Crooks had tended those birds, picking the turkey-chicks out of dew-laden weeds, wrapping them in flannel, stuffing peppercorns down their throats to ward off deadly chills and keep away the pip. Half of her hatchings always die, for turkeys are hard to raise; and now, just now, holidays coming on and fowls getting highest market prices, here comes a nigger and picks off the finest three. Mrs. Crooks is just broken-hearted about it; was calculating how her turkey-money would buy her a new winter dress and 'low her to send a Christmas present to the folks back in Kaintucky.

So Mr. Crooks went on, conscious he was meeting sympathy. He knew many shoats and turkeys and chickens went off from our barns between sunset and sunrise, and never came back. Still the Judge listened in silence. He had on his thinking-cap—but he always had on that.

What was the celebration to which certain students, who often visited us, had invited a scion of the house the night after election? Why had the young freshman told nothing about where he had been and what he had done? Com-

monly he was fond of rehearsing his merrymakings. But of this not a word.

Then why had he said at dinner, only the night before, "Turkey's good; but there is such a thing as seeing too much of it?"

Again, what was the new badge he was wearing with evident satisfaction, in the way Greek letter societies wear their pins? What did the cross *patée* and its letters conceal? T—Turkey? Eh? C—Catchers—Crusaders? Looks that way. Had a band of students leagued for some purpose? What purpose? Social? Could it have any other incentive? Who but they knew!

When the family met at next meal, the Judge asked about the cross dangling from a bit of red ribbon.

"Oh, T. C.'s—a new secret society."

"Who are the members?"

Odd! The very students hotly interested in politics and vigorously defensive of the university against Grangerism!

"Did the boys take the Grangers' victory at the polls much to heart?"

"Oh, they're getting used to it by this time"—here an ill-concealed smile.

"Do they still think the Grangers will wipe the university off the state's educational map?"

"They don't know yet."

Every answer fenced off definite information. To an expert reasoner, clever in examining witnesses, one with so native a gift at reading human nature, a freshman may tell more than he thinks he does. The history, or mystery, of Mrs. Crooks' turkeys cleared to definite narrative.

The Judge talked the matter over with the Good Genius of our household and determined upon trying to recall the lightminded young rogues to sense of, and reverence for, law. And wishing to do this in a way they should not forget, he sent the fraternity word that he had heard of its foundation and had interest in its development—would the members, therefore, take supper with him on a certain Friday evening?

The young rascals confessed they felt flattered by so speedy a recognition of their union, and every son of them showed his estimate by coming on the night named.

Flushed in face from their long walk in the raw November air, they grouped about a blazing fire, and their host, standing with arm on the shelf of the chimney piece told stories in the captivating, story-telling way he had. The boys seemed delighted—these were true human relations, a masterly, white-haired man extending

the hand of fellowship to their untriedness in life.

Supper announced, the company filed into the dining room. The Judge took the head of the table. In front of him a huge turkey lay upon a platter, and midway, and at the table's foot, rested its fellows, smoking, fresh from the oven.

But before he fell to the old-fashioned gentleman's carving of the fowl in front of him, the host paused and began telling how he had noted that the fraternity had its birth about the day of the Grangers' victory—in fact he connected its foundation with a story Mr. Crooks, who lived over by his north woods, told him. The badge of the society seemed, moreover, to confirm his reasoning. And now he had invited the members to sup with him in hopes of for once satisfying their inordinate craving for the sustenance before them.

Still further, he wanted to say that if ever again they needed the flesh of their totem for any T. C. orgies, they should come to him, and he would furnish it; but he begged them never again to stoop to robberies, or to any breaking of the law, even in sport.

He added that their raid on Mrs. Crook's roost had deprived the dame of her pin-money, and

upon his concluding the thieves were not unlightened, brickyard darkies, but enlightened university students!!!—he had sent her full value for the turkeys they had taken.

At sight of the big, trussed birds lying quite alone upon the table, that is, with neither sauces nor vegetables commonly served with their meat just then at hand, and at the beginning of the talk, T. C. faces showed confusion and consternation. But as the Judge went on, what he said making clear his interest and affection and the humor that irradiated his life, the boys recovered their color and poise, and his speech ended amid their self-convicting laughter and applause and cries of "We will come to you!"

In those days many merry dinners and suppers consorted with my Mother's table. Of all this to the T. C.'s was the jovialest. The forayers had so good a time, in fact, that after midnight adieus and they had got almost to the big ravine on their star-lit walk to Laurel Town, they turned and came back to sing under our windows.

"This supper broke up the society," wrote Professor Robinson in his "Reminiscences," "the Turkey Crusaders disbanded and their badges were seen no more."

## IV.

Men such as Professor David Hamilton Robinson gave the university conservative strength in those days—men rooted in right, loyal to the university, not lobbying with whatever board controlled its administration, not among those constantly casting a hook afar (possibly a bit conscious pretensions had been uncovered) to see what seemingly better float they could pull in, but standing by the simple, indeterminate conditions they had accepted with their call, making the university's interest their interest, its democracy their democracy, their character its character; not egotists, not prigs, not mental light-weights, but men of full merit and rounded development.

Such was the university's first Latinist—honest, loyal, sincere, ever and abundantly radiating simple, luminous kindness; the soul of him recalling a mellow-ground meadow, overspread with sunshine, supporting healthful, pleasant airs and fruitful harvests, of use for everyday wont and everyday living.

It was the fine habit of Professor Robinson to open his classes' work of a morning by telling a story in Latin; he meanwhile striding up and down the lecture-room, often measuring turns of

the tale by wheeling a pencil between right thumb and forefinger, or by stroking his rufous beard with his left hand. Doubtless he looked upon such beginnings as excellent for familiarizing our ears with a language not commonly spoken, and as zest-givers, catching our attention and rapidly inducting us into another environment. His open, serene countenance must still stand before many eyes; his quiet, mellow voice still sound in many ears, rehearsing some world-important matter, or perhaps a local happening, for instance, "*T. C.'s Horribles*,"\* or "*In Re T. C.*" Never a man enjoyed humor more.

"T. C.'S" HORRIBLES.\*

*Jam noctis media hora. In coelo nubila spissa  
Stellas abstulerant. Umbrarum tempus erat quo  
Horrenda ignavis monstra apparent. Pueri tum  
Parvi matribus intus adhaerent. Non gratiorem  
Noctem fur unquam invenit. Sed qui veniunt post  
Hanc aedem veterem? Celebrantne aliqua horrida sacra  
Mercurio furum patrono? Discipuline?  
Non possunt! Tutti in lectis omnes requiescunt!  
Estne sodalictum studiosorum relevans se  
Magnis a curis? Sed cur huc conveniunt tam  
Furtivi? In manibus quidnam est vel sub tegumentis?  
O pudor! Et pullos et turkey non bene raptos!  
Vina etiam subrepta professoris alloujus  
(Horresco referens) e cella! Dedecus! Est nil  
Tutum a furibus? En pullos nunc faucibus illis  
Sorbent! Nunc sunt in terra, tum in ictu oculi non  
Apparebunt omne in aeternum! Miseros pullos,*



One morning Professor Robinson met a class with account of the making at his home of some wine. Possibly he detailed the process to illustrate a verse of Horace, or to show old Roman usages and customs. Whatever the incentive he told his story. There, you would suppose, the pleasure ended.

*Infelices O pueros! Illi male capti  
A pueris, sed hi capientur mox male (O! O!!)  
A Plutone atro!  
Forsan lapsis quinque diebus, cum sapiens vir  
Omnes hos juvenes ad cenam magnificenter  
Invitavit. Tempore sane adsunt. Bene laeti  
Judeæ accipiunt et filia pulchra sodales  
Hos furtivos. Ad mensam veniunt. Juvenes cur  
Tam agitantur? Quid portentum conspiciunt nunc?  
Protrudunt ocelli quasi ranarum! Nihil est in  
Mensa præter turkeys! Unus quoque catino!  
Solum hoc, præterea nil!*

## IN RE T. C.

*Quatuor youths ad suburbs venunt,  
Quatuor lads their cursus tenunt,  
Versus granger's domum.  
Nunquam stop to rest their pedes,  
Nunquam find sequestered sedes,  
Sub the shades arborum.*

*Saepe look in partis omnis,  
Fearing quidam, waked from somnis,  
Eos sequitur.  
Gallus from some far off tectum,  
Tuba sounds with great effectum,  
Putit day futurum.*

Presumptions based on general experience always proved inadequate when T. C.s were by. The Professor's Latin *formulae* worked into fermenting minds, and roused memories in several members of that disbanded fraternity. Now, and now only, they forgot the exhortation to right living with which the Judge had prefaced the last T. C. supper.

"Their old ardor returned," wrote Professor Robinson, "and they fairly burned to get hold of those wine bottles. It would be the best joke of their lives.

"A few evenings after two of them called at the professor's house, they seemed in especially happy mood, telling stories, joking and laughing

*Now they reach a procul valley,  
Round a fallen truncus rally,  
Nubes expecterunt.  
Turn with cordes faintly beating,  
Nunc advancing, nunc retreating,  
Castris repererunt.*

*Now ad portum Crito venit,  
Captures hostem, duos tenet,  
Whispers "cave canem."  
Wild the pugna, charge they fecunt,  
Wilder tamen viam makunt,  
Homeward primam lucem.*

almost immoderately. Finally one of them, producing some music, offered to play it. With a big crash he began. And such playing! He ran, and galloped, and cantered, and jumped up and down the keyboard until the old house fairly rattled from chimney-top to cellar—especially the cellar. Then college songs were roared with equal force and energy. This went on an hour or two, when the guests withdrew, with many expressions of pleasure at the delightful evening they had passed.

“The professor and his wife were a little surprised at the call of these young men, who had never called before, and especially at their rather long stay and boistrous conduct. Still they were glad to receive the visit, and retired greatly pleased to think that these T. C.’s, lately so wild, were now disposed to give up their disreputable practices and cultivate the graces and amenities.

“In the morning, on opening the house, many evidences of burglary were plainly visible—in fact, too plainly visible. The hoe and axe and pieces of candle were left near the cellar-window in plain sight, as if courting investigation. It was soon found that the cellar had been entered, the wine taken, and a note left in its place.

“The professor, for obvious reasons, never

mentioned his loss, but the boys thought it too good a joke to keep.”\*

Pranks such as these colored and individualized student-days at Laurel Town more than forty years ago. Their childlikeness witnesses reaction of youthful spirits from strain, relief-seeking in play—reversions to our race’s younger years when a Rob Roy’s rule sufficed,

“the simple plan

That they should take who have the power  
And they should keep who can;”

unconscious returns, we say, to ancestral action when our people’s moral nature had not evolved to the social heights of forming their government and fitting their life to laws of their own making.

And the same ebullience—that had stolen the turkeys and industriously read Plato, Tacitus, Shakespeare and Goethe; that had pilfered the Latin professor’s wine and figured the orbit of remote planets—the same effervescing strength prompted unwearied muscles, one Hallow’en in

\*This chorus from “University Legends” gives the gist of the note. Professor Robinson upheld prohibition then coming to the fore in Kansas politics:

“Oh, the doleful, doleful ditty,  
If a man should break his pledge!  
So we’ll drink up all your wine, and  
Save you from temptation’s edge.”

the eighteen-seventies, to keep the night when, old lore avers, wizzard and witch in "hellish legion sally."

Unseasonable chill, housing and leading folks to hug their fires, hung over Laurel Town all that afternoon. Finally dark grey clouds fell low, and shut in the evening with a driving rain. Just the weather for a self-sacrificing brotherhood bent on protecting their townsmen from seditious spirits!

The circling year had brought a Druidic festival, majestic with age, they told themselves. Laurel Town customs would not permit community-fires to the Sun-god, time-honored tokens of gratitude for harvest-bounties. Yet at least public-minded students might endeavor to ward off sin-stained ghosts who would wander abroad, said legend, and war that night in battalions.

"Bells," the boys reasoned, "have through thousands of years had the fame of inspiring terror in hobgoblins such as will ride each separate gale; for generations their clamor has been reported a prophylactic and saver of mortals from that evil eye which will peer from every raindrop."

Defying hostile weather, their first duty was mastery of the town's bells. They must climb several towers. Unmeasured self-immolation

alone could save the little city from legions of limbo, loose that one night of all the year.

No height so readily met their advances as the square tower of the old Unitarian church. Its rough-hewn stone afforded foothold and the roof-ridge easy entrance. A benedictive messenger of remarkable silver tones hung in its belfry. To this the young devotees made their way, and after fastening cords to the bell's tongue they tossed ropes to their aiders and abettors below.

"The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;  
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast. . . .  
That night, a child might understand,  
The de'll had business on his hand;"

but the boys descended, and retired to recesses of shrubbery across the street.

From this vantage they pulled the bell's clapper against its bronze cup till every weary townsman within hearing of it, cried, "Heaven forefend! How can Satan cast out Satan!"

A wild night, friends.

Enthusiasm seized, and woke to daring, slender, shrinking shreds of youths. For instance, Frank MacLennan became so obsessed with the clangor that he hastened to pull the house-bell of a ledger-studying, law-abiding hardware merchant he had never seen.

Answering the door-bell's ring a woman's

gentle voice sounded from a second-story window; "What is wanted?"

Frank, standing on the porch of the house, explained that he had come on business which required a personal answer. Shortly the front door opened and an anxious voice invited him to go up stairs.

The young derring-doer ascended and boldly entered the room of the merchant. Advancing a few steps toward the bed, he said in unshrinking accents that he had to have the immediate advice of a specialist; "I want," he continued, speaking slowly and clearly, "to know the price of thermometers."

The hardware man threw back the covers and sprang from his bed. A dim, reflected light showed a kicking foot speeding through the air. But the enquirer had anticipated the attack. His spare body was already half way down the stairs, and the only unimpeded thing that reached him was the merchant's roar, and reiterate call, for that East Indian coin of infinitesimal value known as a dam.

Yet one more sortie these youthful dynamos made, when a commencement week of the eighteen-seventies came to hand.

A few months before, the Chancellor and *Prex*, General John Fraser, had married a young

lady of Laurel Town, whose strength of character no wise abated from Puritan forebears, more than one of whom became president of Harvard College. In lesser qualities than character, in a captivating personality, and in graceful figure, smiling face, glancing grey eyes and fluffy brown curls, Mrs. Fraser was also gifted.

Commencement neared, we say. Therefore through Fraser Hall's open doors poured visitors who had come to Laurel Town to witness the festival and were delighting themselves with such sights as Professor Snow's famous fossils. Their will to see everything at hand led them even to glance at a human skeleton hung in the physiology lecture-room. Its jointed bones had served an instructor for illustration during the last academic year, and now, locked in glass closet, awaited a next call to duty.

Among other sight-seers three students went sauntering from room to room. Pausing here for some interest, examining another there, they came at last to the cupboard of the skeleton. At once they grouped close, as if in discussion, and while one fitted keys and tested the lock, the other two shielded his movements. An on-looker might have thought they were tracing the line of *tibia*, or *fibula*, through the glazed door.

"Here's a key that will unlock it."



"Tie it with the one that opens the lecture-room door."

"Put it in your back pocket."

"Twelve o'clock Monday night, then."

"By the box-elder."

"Don't forget the card-board."

Two nights later three students, clad in odd clothes, raised a window in the basement of Fraser Hall. No noise awoke the janitor.

They walked softly up stairs, unlocked the doors, unhooked the skeleton, and clasping it close in arms, crept still higher up the building. A westerling moon lighted their way till they reached the loft.

Then came gruesome work—with the stub of a candle, and peering into stuffy darkness which had no end.

"Whose skeleton was this, anyway?" asked one as they groped forward hugging the bones.

"What did it do while it wore flesh on earth?" queried the second, "What name did it answer to?"

"How did it come to its business of educating sophomores in the articulation of their bodies instead of lying decently and comfortably in the ground?" continued the first. "Did its owner forfeit his life for some crime?"

"Gee whizz! Let's get out of this!"

*"You growling! Huh; You got us into it."*

Cheek by jowl with a skeleton once a man's, creeping over loose boards of a loft in semi-darkness, feeling forward toward a broad circular opening in the middle of the floor—all this they had not put in their programme.

*"Here's the rim of the hole."*

They tied a rope to the hook fastened in the skull. To the bones of the feet they hung a card about eighteen inches square and stretched the skeleton along the curved edge.

Then they turned and scuttled to the basement window through which they had entered.

A soft, teeming night of early summer lay on hill and low lands. Winds forerunning a June dawn blew over the campus. In the east shone the morning star.

But freshening day, instead of cooling, strengthened their fever, and before separating they drew lots to determine who should carry their labor to its end.

Commencement arrived.

The all-seeing sun did not look upon a happier people. Work of a hard year now quite done, and hours full of the buoyant joy that commencement alone knows—when aged, academic sobriety forgets its ankylosis and unites with supple, jocund youth. Chancellor himself viv-

idly happy. The grace which brightens women of university towns during commencement sitting signally upon the Chancellor's wife.

So passed the day. Night fell. A band of the United States Army still discoursed music in the crowded *aula*; when through the opening in the ceiling that awaited a central chandelier, the physiology-lecturer's skeleton came circling down to the rhythm of a Strauss waltz—swinging slowly in broad rounds over the assembled people. A card dangling from its heels bore the legend *PREX*.

Few saw the waltzing death's head at first, and those who did met it in amazed silence. Then, when they had pointed it out to others, a murmur of disapproval rose. Yet, finally, sense of the inconsequence of the conceit stole over the throng, and a few gravely smiled.

Trying moments, these, to the gallant general! At the end of so perfect a day! And so successful a year! Yet his canny Scottish wit stood steadfast, and when Mrs. Fraser, with the confiding air of faculty-wives, smilingly asked; "What does *Prex* mean?"—without a moment's hesitation the Chancellor answered; "Faculty."

Thoughtless sport! Rough-house tomfoolery; but cleanhearted. The hatchers of the joke ad-

mired the keeper of the seal. They had merely misdirected indomitable high spirits, Anglo-Saxon seeking for adventure—the racial temper that urged to the ships of Humphrey Gilbert, the Hawkinses and Francis Drake, laughter-loving, imagination-driven youths of three hundred and fifty years ago; a racial temper that, in our own years of 1917 and 1918, filled countless transports to France with American boys whose record negatives the chart of every psychologist; imperturbably jovial, rivaling one another in making light of danger, independently constructive and recklessly courageous in rushing to daring action.

## V

Still, not all were giants in those eighteen-seventies. When our marvellous professor of English literature listened to a call to Philadelphia, the administrative board chose to his place a man graduated from a college near the centre of Massachusetts; an oxlike creature of solid, well-knit, somewhat *coram-nobis* figure, with smiling eyes packed in adipose tissue and a ruddy beaming countenance whose shine no classroom disaster ever quenched.

Some inexplicable fate, perhaps a mother, or spinster aunt, nursing ambitions for him, had

projected him into the republic of books and learning, when nature plainly made him for a life of muscular activity. His peculiarity was that he had never been able to learn.

In his senior class this man had a parcel of youngsters more or less Wertherian—Goethe's influence, his manysidedness and majestic personality at that hour and for us were very real—youngsters again not merely gifted with that amazing self-confidence which is a guardian daemon of the young, but conscious of mental grasp by such little events as that at a commencement dinner where a state official declared the word *education* from the Latin *e*; to lead, and *duco*; forth.

When we took up "Paradise Lost," the unique equipment of our new instructor first declared itself, he telling us in a sort of forehanded defense, a casting-up of breast-works or trench digging before an enemy, as it were, that he "believed the Garden of Eden story, and would prefer to be made of clay to descent from Plato's beatified oyster." In wordless courtesy we asked no questions about Plato's oyster.

Then, the better to impress his position upon our understanding, he added; "I believe I believe in the actual existence of Adam, Eve, the serpent and its wickedness in the Garden of

Eden, five thousand years ago, and *truthfully* depicted by Milton.”\*

Any radicalism lurking in our midst could not misinterpret this endeavor to forestall theories of evolution we might be pleased to advance, or propositions that we were dealing with poetic myths and Adam might signify tribal distinction.

People of to-day who see principles of evolution accepted by and a strong pillar of orthodoxy, can not, I repeat, realize the fervor of those taking sides in those earlier days for and against the new evangel—then kept constantly before the world, as I have said on page thirty foregoing, by publications of Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, Tyndall and others.

One day, in our analyses of “Paradise Lost,” one of us suggested that the poem had as its basis a purely Manichean conception. “Manichean” proved a corker. When, however, our guide found what the word connoted, he rejected the offer.

Another time, upon our going from Milton’s word-description of deity to painting and speaking of the great Italian, he asked if Michelangelo had really painted deity.

\*These quotations were written down with pencil at the time.

"I would not paint a picture of God," he exclaimed with a shudder, "I would be deterred by a sense of the wickedness of it."

Every class-hour brought its astonishment. One day our instructor spoke of Grote, the historian of Greece, and identified him with Grotius.

" 'Hugo Grotius, the Dutch publicist, lived in the seventeenth century,' put in one of our number, 'and George Grote in London in the nineteenth.' "

" 'Why,' ejaculated our poor pedant; 'I thought Grotius was the Latin form of his name!' Yes—hum, well, I'll look it up."

Another chronology of his claimed that Confucius studied Aristotle.

Individual treatments of Milton's religiosity and poetic genius have startled students elsewhere—for instance in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But we in Kansas were trail-making, shaded by a university not two hundred and fifty, in fact not ten, years old, with nothing in our hands save a few books; but in our heads intellectual vigor and will to find the best thought and written about subjects we undertook.

Still, from our study of the sonorous Puritan we may have got as much as students sitting in

sight of John Harvard's statue and listening to a lecture, a part of which,\* marked by a humor all its own, follows—the lecturer sitting on a low table, one knee curving over its corner, his right hand swinging a slender steel chain which described a circle at its end with a bunch of keys, and winding the chain over forefinger, first to right and then to the left:—

“Personally I do not like Spenser, and Milton is to me excessively unpleasant. Milton is trying to be a Puritan and an artist at the same time, and the two things do not, and can not, coincide—a conscious moral purpose minus any effort for artistic effect.

“To my thinking ‘Comus’ isn’t in it with ‘The Faithful Shepherdess.’ A fellow like Milton that has bored me with ‘Paradise Lost,’ and ‘Samson Agonistes,’ I have absolutely no use for. When I read Milton, as I have to, I read him for study, not for enjoyment. I feel that Milton is rhetoric, just as Spencer is rhetoric. Take ‘L’Allegro,’ ‘Comus,’ etc.; these are rhetoric, jolly good rhetoric some parts of them. I should guess that ‘Lycidas,’ and some few of Milton’s sonnets, were some of the most spontaneous things he ever did. He certainly wasn’t spontaneous in ‘Samson Agonistes,’ although

\*Taken down in shorthand.



he spoke out with a certain resonant bang. No one can be spontaneous who constructs a Greek tragedy on the plan of a Hebrew story."

## VI

Those earlier, less organized days in Kansas, things material were more meager than now. Memories of the Civil War, its chastening sorrows, still fresh, thankfulness for renunciations, for untellable sacrifices that had seemingly made our institutions permanent, warmed every heart.

The people of the state who had fought were, in the large, knit in blood and gifted with Anglo-Saxon traditions and the spirit that formed our government and our English speech. A notable percentage of Celts had come, for the wave of Irish immigration had been rolling over the Atlantic close to a generation. And with the Celts' racial adaptability and cleverness, they were merging, though keeping the sparkle of Celtic blood, with Anglo-Saxon pioneers.

In those days, also, people of the German current sought the state's rich soil—a few owing to the German unrest of the eighteen-forties; other thrifty, staid soil-tillers from Prussia,

Hanover, Bavaria, many smaller states; and Austria, and Switzerland. A share of Scandinavians, too.

Also there drifted in a quota of Jews, who seemingly united themselves with the general life; at least you saw and heard little of the idiosyncrasies which have made that people "boarders" in whatever country they have wandered to and settled in numbers.

Then, again the commonwealth had served as asylum for fugitive negroes before and during the war; and now men, women and children fled to its bounties from hardships they deemed unbearable; one winter coming in carloads and destitute of every necessity.

The old, Free-State folks' helpfulness, even to giving of self still remained a spiritual treasure in Laurel Town, and housewives quick with pity for whomsoever they thought wronged, hastened to gather raiment for shivering bodies and to prepare food for empty stomachs.

In years succeeding the Civil War, we say, fame of the opulent and idealistic soil of Kansas—the state's fight for freedom, the state's abounding lands—circled the earth and brought many from afar. Bohemians in colonies. Menonites from Russia, too, men of rough, austere faces, and stalwart forms clad in sheepskin coats

and high boots; women, with kerchiefs and shawls and countenances of meekness and resignation, weariedly tending round-eyed, docile children.

They all sought liberty. Democracy is positive, it points out how alike men are. Aristocracy, they had learned through suffering, is negative, it emphasizes men's difference. Coming from Europe because of spiritual revolt against conditions thrust upon them there, they brought a soreness that had struck to their very marrow and become chronic. But in pursuit of working into concrete life a principle to which they had given their hearts, they brought also the indescribably splendid spirit of sacrifice for an idea—a gift given comparatively few coming to our shores the last half century.

If some of these immigrants, unable to comprehend what we Americans had forged in the fire of battle before they came—if they had no spiritual insight into what we meant to do with our possessions; if they became Americans in name only; if they had none of our great traditions, not a spark of that intellectual enlightenment and Anglo-Saxon constructive imagination that set up and maintained our Government; if they had no sense of the spirit that settled over our people after the sacrifices of the Civil

War—if, not understanding modernity, not generative of ideas and lacking present-day outlook; if for a generation or two not comprehending our institutions—many of these immigrants had at least that marvellous spur, singleness of heart, also courage and persistence, and they made good in many ways and weights; they caught and carried on devotion to exalted ideals of the earlier settlers.

So it happened that when the Anglo-Saxon state-builders who had forged forward into the wilds where now stands Kansas, and had given the strength of their bodies to making the nature they found a shelter and support for later people—when the fiery chariot of their spirit, a “chariot of fire and horses of fire,” bore these Elijahs heavenward, many differing folks, carrying many different bloods and traditions, took up their fallen mantles.

Many differing ideas inflooding must bear vast meaning to a state's institutions. And to its university founded by Anglo-Saxon pioneers on Anglo-Saxon Puritan ideals; not within the first generation, may be, but when the inflooders' children's children shall discover treasures offered within its walls.

For a decade after the Civil War race-sentiment resurgent from battle-fields—American

sentiment—had force in studies at Laurel Town. Students inclined to seek the serenities of ancient thought, to enlarge the present by going to the past and re-living the life of mankind; in the faith that the truest method of gaining ideas and sentiments worthy of assimilation lay in analyses of old Greek and Latin writers. "It is in that golden stain of time"—Ruskin voiced a conviction of theirs that they should not imprison themselves in their own age—"that we are to look for the real light, and colour and preciousness." And Shelley, "Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their roots in Greece."\*

The university, poor in all but hopes and ambitions, met their needs. At its beginning somewhat after the expanse, mental temper and discipline of a college of the Atlantic slope, it gradually developed into a group of schools. One subject after another pushed open its doors,

These reasonings of ours foreran Sir Henry Maine's famous definition which restated Shelley's; and Dr. Osler's cogent particularizing just now published:

"One of the marvels, so commonplace that it has ceased to be marvelous, is the deep rooting of our civilization in the soil of Greece and Rome—much of our dogmatic religion, practically all the philosophies, the models of our literature, the ideals of our democratic freedom, the fine and the technical arts, the fundamentals of science and the basis of our law. The Humanities bring the student into contact with the master minds who gave us these things."

bearing claim for settled, benefactive residence on the ground that learning as a whole, and the amelioration of human beings in all life's relations, should be a democratic university's field, not alone, as back in the centuries and in colleges less intimate with the people, ancient classics and theologies, with mathematics, and possibly law, as ancillaries.

This broad plea accorded with the ideals of the university's founders. They had doubtless wanted to make impossible overbearing of those literary and linguistic studies that degenerate into weak dilettantism and a self-complacent phrase-making which is the other half of sterility of thought. Even in the days when they wrought they heard criticisms of a salt-water college; "Nothing to stimulate or develop the perceptions, and everything to suppress instinct and enthusiasm: one learned neither to see nor to feel." Warping and drying and then wrapping the intellect in spices, preserving merely a mummified semblance, the founders meant definitely to avoid.

Recognition not only of the whole field of human knowledge, but also practical applications of that knowledge as an ideal of university teachings, brought tremendous changes. It set aside old Greek and Latin studies as essentials

for a student. That, in one way, made the university more democratic; it meant the triumph of the utilitarian spirit; so far as it had then revealed itself. In another way the new order effected less democracy, for no longer could the institution train its students to the same universal standards, give to all the same way of looking at life, the same broad, solid foundation of companionship.

The new precept manifested, too, a further negative—that students might fail to gain historical perspective, might fail to acquire substitute for the stably grounded regard and reflective knowledge of human institutions that the old classics, rightly taught, to those fitted for their teachings, instill—a vision essential to peoples of a democracy, for what futurists without wisdom of the past build is a structure on sand.

The brave, old idea conceived in our English word *learning*, the calling to ourselves as chiefest study man, and man's life in the centuries, thus anaemically fading, students would come to differ from those of earlier years. Many a one had suffered stern, hard necessity—offspring, perhaps, of the folk coming to our country after the Civil War, not of English speech, not of Anglo-Saxon blood, often filing

their claim for land and settling to wrest their livelihood from the soil; a student who had been like a calf between two pails of milk, legends and traditions of his parents, traditions and legend of the people who had made this country desirable for his family to come to and stay by.

He might seem incapable of reverence for the mighty feats of our earlier generations, might rarely soften into gratitude for remembered travails of institutions which protected and supported him, of even the very language he spoke. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," in this like the fiery practitioner we call Saint Paul, he might appear to think the earth and mankind did not exist before his advent, that was not his business, and to have little interest whether they went on after his exit.

At the university numbers increased of men and women eager for utilitarian studies merely; seeking to gain money-making knowledge, "useful information" solely; to learn only what would help them to speedy, easier-winning of practical things of life. Thought of fundamental brain-work in company of the forgers of the humanities, study for disciplinary and aesthetic values to lift high intelligence to yet greater heights, could seldom enter the



estimate of such matriculates ; not because they lacked native ability, native insight, but because of the narrowness to which their lives had been constrained, because of the impatience and impetuosity of youth—utilitarian needs having controlled their destinies, we say, withholding knowledge of and taste for the refinements of the humane order, and furnishing merely the positive, scientific, mathematical.

Manifestly this zeal for the practical would give students a sobriety, a certain staidness, would hinder reversion to the broad youth-prolonging stand of our Anglo-Saxon race, its shy, rollicking humor—that abundance and splendor of imagination which Sir Walter Raleigh embodied when he said he “shot at another mark than present profit.” A young academic who had already gained knowledge of competitive business would naturally carry less effervescing spirits than the earlier students.

## VII.

Years were going on and these students' world growing more competitive. Over a soil that had, until a generation before, known only the monopolies of Indian hunters and the herd-

ing of bison, pioneers were learning the secret of co-operation. The more aggressive Farmers' Alliance succeeded Grangerism. Prosperity was enlisting an army. Materialism setting aside spiritual estimates. Altruisms of the Anglo-Saxon state-makers retiring in shamefacedness. Sympathy with them becoming void. Of those two race instincts, idealism and utilitarianism, the second gaining headway—leading to the saying; "The trouble with the Yankee is he rubs badly at the juncture of soul and body."

Then, suddenly, a bursting of booms. Corn at ten cents, or its use as a fuel. The birth, in 1890, and on Kansas soil, of the People's Party through the cry of a gaunt, underfed farmeress pointing her finger at a politician of Jack Falstaff girth and shrilling:

"Say! You! It ain't no use you a-talkin', an' a-talkin', an' a-talkin'. You ain't never done nothin' for Us; an' you never will."

And through the stump-speeches of a limber-tongued Irish agitatrix; "We must raise more hell; and less corn."

New politics taught organization. Community ideas strengthened. Sons and daughters of Grangers and Allied Farmers who, in infancy, had learned lessons of co-operation, accelerated social unifying. Reaction from the

overmastering solitariness of the Anglo-Saxon pioneers—a people, we must repeat, ill at bending to concerted action, overwhelming individualists earnestly seeking the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of our foreparents; blotting out opportunism, expediency, puny practicality lying at hand; dreamers, yet swift and strong to dare and do—reaction was a rising tide.

In the university many facts bore witness to the changing spirit. Loss of faith in the individual's spontaneously constructive exercise was one—loss of fervor for “hiking” along country-roads in delight of fresh air and buoyant body, opening thoughts to solitary horizons, assimilating lore learned indoors while resting under a hedge or branches of an oak; trudging, for instance, towards an oval mound stretching across the south-east prairie, virid with the many greens of tree and field and veiled in seductive sapphire haze; or trending north-west to a tiny lake upon whose languid waters chinquapins rustled, vivacious teal sallied and wood-ducks preened their velvet feathers.

The impossible happened. At an institution not fifty years founded by men and women who had gloried in loneliness of soul, and what they were able to accomplish through solitary

thought; in a state settled and developed by spiritual strength and independence of the individual, sports, ritualized, supervised by a trained expert called coach, worked imperialistic way. Before sons and daughters of farmers who drove their own plough horses, a few sometimes over-developed youths, to whom the coach gave his special attention, competed with strangers of identical experience; while the majority, athletes by proxy, now and then a pastry skin among them, sat hammering bleachers and yelling. The scene lacked little for recalling, to thinking minds, how certain dancers do the dancing of orientals, degenerated, who, themselves, recline on cushions.

Then, too, in this institution of greatest aspirations of the human spirit, numbers increased of those spending no little time in furbishing college politics, getting out student publications, setting on foot dances and theatricals, in fact engaging so continuously in "business," and "society," that the on-looker sometimes wondered if they really went to the university to study. These absurdities of theirs may have been youngsters' attempts to act the role of "live-wires;" imitate someone they admired in their pre-academic life. But the pity of the waste!—pity that commercialism should negate a university's spiritual

authority!—pity that overseeing wisdom should not prevent division of attention and demand effort to the limit of the students' abilities! Even among boys and girls with the soundness of an agricultural democracy behind them such excesses must bring lower scholarship and inferior standards in their train.

Clearer vision of ourselves we sometimes gain if we turn to others' environment:—Oxford and Cambridge Universities have for centuries lifted the life of England, rather of all Britain and her Colonies, through unbending devotion to their ideals of humanity; through their influence upon students carrying their spiritual seed to the people. A democratic university may lose this great cleansing and elevating influence, in part, if, stooping to subserve passing pettiness, it leaves unexalted its own native rights.

## VIII.

With an organizing of estimates in Kansas—  
increase of synthetic community-thinking which  
moves in emotionalized mass formation and dis-  
claims critical, analytical judgment (declaring,  
as one time it did, the personal point of view  
“bilious”)—with the socializing of estimates of

the last decades of the nineteenth century, there also grew in the state abnormal regard for "popularity."

What one generation will struggle for the next is apt to treat with neglect. That is, generations more easily placed are prone to cast aside what their parents with abnegation won. The youngsters strike out seeking the opposite. "Natural resilience;" you suggest; "philosophic search for the novelty of change after finding the prevailing order's defects. Every age differs from the one which precedes it; a classic age swings to a romantic."

We have seen certain reactions from the apostolic aloofness of mind and aloofness of action that distinguished early Kansas idealists—products, for clarity we repeat, of those Puritan teachings which through generations declared the world's well-being, its moral government in fact, to lie with each act of each man, woman and child. Bowing to "popularity" witnessed another reaction.

Shrines to the evanishing god rose on many house-hearths. Uncounted victims bled upon his altars. Not to be "popular" became exceedingly unpopular. Indeed, to cast the reflection of "unpopular" on a person was not wholly unlike the old imputations of wizardry and witchery,

in that such reflections set the object a target for scoffs. The truth that only a fool sticks to hearsay, *nur ein Narr bleibt bei ein Red',* fell forgotten.

The craze affected even the fancied exaltations and serenities of academic life. As minds ran, report about a member of the faculty turned on whether he was "popular"—no matter if he merely pursued an aggressive self-advertisement, or if he adapted himself to shifting opinions and watched to seize opportunity, or lacking personal convictions avoided the friction that rises from loyalty to fundamental principles. Whether "popular" among students, or their elders, it was not necessary to explain; the use of the word, indefinite but a booster, cast a spell.

A man may be popular for the reason Socrates was popular with young men of Athens—because warming his heart and piloting his effort works the forward-looking, insistent conscience of the race; because he loses the individual and utters the race voice. Then, again, he may be popular for the reason a street-corner faker who gives out lollipops is popular; or for the reason movies are popular.

In Kansas "popular" became a cabalistic, fairly hypnotizing word, we say. That is one

of the dangers constantly threatening a democracy's Thinking Shop—danger lest intellectual independence is not safeguarded; danger lest policy in following gusts of opinion pay better than principle; danger lest smooth, smug mediocrity of a handful of politicians dominate; danger lest, timid as a hare at the onset of those seeking his job, a professor—of all men he who has devoted himself to the communication of truth; danger lest he suppress his views to maintain a colorless neutrality and give no point of attack. The character of a body rarely rises above the average of the individuals who form that body.

Nowadays fashion among university teachers is to be wide-awake men; half man of the business world with an eye on the practical, half theorist; of the type of the engineer. Of necessity university pundits are practical in a degree. But they are identified with ideas; they are public employees, and, if loyal to their duty of the communication of truth, they must discuss issues affecting all peoples of the earth. They should be leaders. Contentedly to interpret crudest ideas of a populace, to minimize the spiritual side of human life and rob life of lofty ideals, is an ignoble deed and must end in vulgarizing a university, in making *Shop* pre-



dominate *Thinking*. Perhaps what James Russell Lowell said of poets is true of professors; "The reputation of a poet who has a high idea of his vocation, is resolved to be true to that vocation, and hates humbug, must be small in his generation."

Worshipers of popularity ultimately cheapen to commonplace and lack the distinction of premiership.

## IX.

Slogans serve weakness as well as strength in a democracy. Daily cares, daily needs, forbid our ubiquitous Master and Mistress Everybody from thinking out each matter put before them for consideration and action. But a thought, a truth, compressed into a gathering cry, is seeded among the people. Then does it motivate the mass.

So with other catch-words. They pass from mouth to mouth and lead to deeds, and sometimes no little work before developing into a truth or falling from corrupting falsehood at their core. How long they may need to find verity depends upon a people's earnestness and intelligence. We are still in that stage of de-

velopment when a lie may run the whole world round while Truth is putting on her boots.

So it is distortions creep into history; histories great, histories small. Lovers of verity, workers for verity, all see that. A thing is done, for instance, you plant a young apple-tree. You say, "I am digging for its foundation, planting the tree in what folks say is a remote, soilless, unprofitable ground. But the sapling is of right grain and girth, and I have faith that weak as it is, it will, by the hand of God, grow to maturity, cheer men with its beauty and further men with its fruits."

The tree flourishes.

Later comers on the earth, seeing its ample bowery and far-reaching aid to man, which in the planting were clear to long-visioned souls only—later comers seeing the beauty of its shade, and value to the state of its harvest, bunch hearsays and ascribe the humane vision and severe labor of the digging and planting to other than you, who remembered the thirteenth chapter of Luke and its mustard seed, "which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree; and fowls of the air lodged in its branches."

The school of law had a real history like this of your hypothetical apple-tree. Later gener-

ations fell into the fallacy—a fallacy for the most part of the ignorant and shallow-minded—of taking a name familiar to their ears and round it grouping tales of affairs grown large and benefactive. Philologists call such a process myth-making, and tell us that fancy plays in building a larger part than fact. Pity of it is that the myth-making not only sets forth an untruth, but destroys what Solomon called “an understanding heart,” love of justice and truth; ability to discriminate between truth and falsehood. “Nobody can live long,” wrote Dr. Johnson, “without knowing that falsehoods of convenience or vanity, falsehoods from which no evil immediately ensues, except the general degradation of human testimony, are very lightly uttered, and once uttered are sullenly supported.”

Solicitude for the foundation of the school of law led Judge Stephens through years to press forward needs of the state and the university. The past is mother of the future, and he was ever endeavoring to make experiences of the past build riches for the time to come. He believed every American should know general principles of law, that American citizens, approaching manhood and womanhood, should know that the government of their country is a

Government of Law, that "the master they own is law," as an ancient Greek said of his countrymen. Such knowledge would instil veneration for law, guard against violations of law, and show that enforcement of the law rests mainly with the people themselves. Fundamental ideas of law a school of law should offer every student; in addition to its peculiar learning for its own students.

And consciousness that he could receive no personal benefit from the founding, knowledge that his connection with the school could be no other than that of urger and adviser of its inception, permitted him an expansive zeal and enthusiasm in furthering his ideas, and served to protect him from charge of self-seeking—an imputation rising easily in a commonwealth where conditions are not yet stereotyped, in a state to which later men have gone because they believed competition lighter there than in their old home and "getting on" easier, acid jealousy eating its way to a greater role in life there than in less fluid conditions.

Finally, in November, 1878, after advising with the administrative board, and after refusing their offer of deanship, Judge Stephens had the gratification of opening "the law department" for which he had through years labored.

"The state owes to itself to adopt that policy which shall most advance the welfare of its inhabitants," he said in his address that evening. "Knowledge of the law makes better citizens, more moral, more honest. . . .to love justice and hate iniquity the more." "It becomes of greatest importance that the educational institutions of our state. . .educate the people in knowledge of the law, not necessarily to make practising lawyers but to protect the state itself . . . that truth may prevail in the state's laws, and justice increase and dwell among the people."

Processes of evolution are slow, we have constantly to tell ourselves. Wherever men congregate, and human life is lived, Bodenstedt's lines keep true;

"Who thinks the truth,  
Must hold the bridle in his hand;  
Who writes the truth,  
Must ready in the stirrup stand;  
Who speaks the truth,  
Must have on wings to flee the land."\*

\*In truth to Bodenstedt let us quote his idiomatic German:

*Wer die Wahrheit denkt,  
Muss sein Pferd am Zügel haben;  
Wer die Wahrheit schreibt,  
Muss sein Fuss im Bügel haben;  
Wer sie aber spricht,  
Muss statt Fusse Flügel haben.*

But returns do hearten toilers for justice.

The foundation of the university of a democratic commonwealth is primarily to train men and women to living for things of the spirit—to preserve and inculcate all ancient truth and further all modern, to guide all people, of intellectual impulse enough to comprehend it, in the way of truth. Truth is the core of the university's strength in all its functions, all its schools. Only through unfailingly serving truth can the university lead to the fulness of life truth brings.

“To love the truth, to wish to know it, to believe in it, to work, if possible, to discover it; to dare to look it in the face, to swear never to falsify, diminish, or add to it, even in view of an *apparently* higher interest, for no *really* higher interest can possibly exist,” is as true for the university of a democracy in America, and at all times, as when in such sentences, Gaston Paris pleaded for truth's universality before the French Academy.

“For the truth, it endureth; and is always strong,” quoth Zorobabel of old, “it liveth and conquereth for evermore.”

## X.

To see life objectively in Kansas is difficult. Absorbed in living it, you do not see the woods for the trees. In older communities where life is more in perspective, caste, artificiality, restricted opportunity, conditions are easier to pronounce upon; manners, habits, usages, forms matured and established give a background and make the sketching in of characters easier. In Kansas you are confronted and confused by striking individualisms or socialisms. And each and every is busy. A Kansas child it was who caught up a popular hymn and sang:

"There'll be humpin to do;  
If we all get to heaven,  
There'll be humpin to do."

So in a utilitarian, alfalfa-enfolded university whose support has been through apportions by a biennial legislature, life can not be dull or without ideals. Life can not be dull or without ideals in any democracy, if its people have real life, real liberty and pursuit of real happiness in their hearts. And students of this university are democrats of democrats. An arid formalist might merely denominate them "good mixers;" a Henry James say, "superabundant,

promiscuous democrats, without love of selection." Yet their instinct for the right probably tells them that the completest aristocrat is the completest democrat, and that this spiritual law holds in Kansas, as elsewhere; that it is only the self-doubting democrat who is not an aristocrat, and only the self-doubting aristocrat who is not a democrat.

Energetic these students ever have been, self-reliant to an amazing degree. Productive labor in which many of them engage, even in early youth, has given them well-trained senses and personal initiative. Then, a climate of the intensity of theirs must breed the adventurous. Their radiant strength, both of soul and body I would bear witness to, as I endeavored in *The University of Hesperus*. Added testimony a veteran lately gave me—how his marvellous physical vigor, gained in youth on a Kansas farm, earned money to take him through the academic course; and yet now sad poverty proved when midnight carriages rolled by bearing his classmates from dancing parties, while he had spent the evening studying in his attic, and—standing by an April garden he spoke—"without any daffodil."

They breathe deep, these students, in a broad-chested way. Commonly they are low-voiced.



Their language a sturdy vernacular, English not debased by idioms from foreign tongues.

If they produce, or when they produce, a literature—for it is difficult to think a people, developing from such forebears, in so distinctive a climate, should be sterile—their literature will have universality, largeness of appeal. They will prove the truth of George Sand's saying, "God reveals himself more and more to poets of the people and philosophers of the people."

A literature which will attract by its elemental simplicity, I venture to predict. It will not delight in the petty, superficial; in wordy analyses; in rhetorical tricks, cult of style for style's sake; in virtuosity, financial elegance of manner made ridiculous by narrow spiritual range. Nor will it be bald, or barren. Springing in that environment it will have intensity of feeling—that one generator of thought which is real thought—and unswerving fidelity to the view of life of its people. It will be natural, independent, and far from insincerity and pretence.

Love of Kansas—its lustrous sunlight and star-sown night-skies, its temperamental storms, the fountains and flora of its rolling earth—is born in its people, warms their blood, knits their bone, strengthens their muscle and height-

ens their spirit to homage. Love of social test and experiment, also. They have their own *flair*. "Kansas folks," said doughboys, returning from France in 1919, to workers of the Kansas Welcome Association in New York, "*Kansas folks are home. They understand; nobody else does.*" Emotions like these, seeking to express themselves through the medium of language, give a state its own individual literature.

The speech of these students is English, I say, living speech, now and then strengthened by colloquialisms (a trace even of the archaism of the double negative) inherited from some county of England, or Scotland, or Ireland; racial crystals not yet shamed out of use by standardizing teachers and newspaper-reading. In other words the tang of home-spun phrase is in their tongue and has thus far escaped obliteration.

"He pronounced the letter R (*litera canina*) very hard," said John Aubrey of John Milton, "a certaine signe of a satyricall witt."

Students of the university pronounce the *litera canina* very hard; but it is not true that they have a satirical wit. Satire must have another horizon than the one in view. Absorbed in the juncture of their own heaven and earth, they are ardent, positive, constructive, optimistic,

centered on what they are undertaking, thinking with their hearts as well as their heads.

The look of their eyes I used often to wonder at. And, after years, I heard that others wondered, too; *Les garçons ont quelque chose devant les yeux que nous autres nous ne connaissons pas*, said a French surgeon in the summer of 1918, after visiting boys like these of Kansas lying wounded in his hospital in Paris. *Je ne sais pas si c'est Dieu, ou le Président Wilson, ou la doctrine Monroe, mais c'est un idéal comme jamais je n' ai vu ma longue vie.*

Life is to them an epic delight—broad pictures, childlike enthusiasms and faith in their deed. They are single-hearted utilitarians who have seized their life-career-motive, what youth and a striking readiness to measure practical values make plain is within their grasp.

*Wer sein selbst Meister ist und sich beherrschen kann,  
Dem ist die weite Welt und alles unterthan.*

If any among them fail, it is doubtless from lack of singleness of purpose.

People of the heroic age of Kansas bequeathed the university to those later forming the body-politic, and declared the institution necessary to the spirit of their commonwealth. They had

settled on the land called Kansas delighting with the delight of Anglo-Saxons in state-building. Hostilities rose; hostilities defying enumeration, defying definition in the vastness of their meaning to our nation's life. But those early people built on—built doggedly because, fired with a great imagination, they knew they built forever.

“Old and early habits of conservative obedience to . . . the laws under which they grew up and found both liberty and protection still cling to them,” wrote a visitor among them in the winter of 1855-56. “Immigrants of so high an order in cultivation, natural ability, or energetic foresight and calculation, never before planted themselves as the nucleus of a new State.”





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